



Same game different versions - Lancelot on a CGA PC and (inset) an EGA PC

the locations do convey authority and atmosphere. But you can't forgive some of the atrocious puzzles, which is unusual in a Level 9 game where the challenges are as a rule inventive and satisfying.

The real problem on the puzzle front seems to be the scale of the action that Level 9 have undertaken to include in the game. For example, at one point Lancelot has to save Tintagel from an invading army. That's a tall order for a sub-plot, but solving it with a puzzle of astonishing, one-minute simplicity both disappoints the player and devalues the scenario.

That's not to say that there are several excellent puzzles in Lancelot. It's just to lament the fact that there are also several appalling ones as well.

The selling points of this game are the scenario, the high level commands (which include GO TO, FIND, FOLLOW, OOPS etc),

and the interaction. The first sales point is sadly undermined by sloppiness, the second pulls its weight and makes the game very easy to play, and the third again succumbs to occasional glitches. That's a record of one success out of three - not enough for a decent epitaph and certainly not enough for a game that must be one of the great 'might have beens' of 1988. ●

THE ACE VERDICT

A technically impressive game, as one would expect from Level 9, but the expectations aroused by the idea are not fulfilled by the execution.

LANDSCAPE	82	SYSTEM	79
CHALLENGE	91	ENCOUNTERS	85

LIVING WITH LANCELOT

Lancelot, in common with most Level 9 games these days, is a three part story. In Part 1, you meet Arthur, Merlin, Sir Kay, and your love-to-be Guenever. You also explore the castle town of Camelot and get used to the game system.

In Part 2, you rush off and prove your worth as a knight by rescuing damsels in distress, defeating armies, and above all rescuing various captive knights. These then become commandable characters who can (mostly) help you in solving some of the games other puzzles.

Part 3, which you can jump straight to from the main menu,



involves the Quest for the Holy Grail and features Lancelot's son Galahad as well as the old knight himself.

Throughout the adventure, gameplay is largely shaped by

some of the high-level commands, in particular GO TO which enables you to instantly locate almost any person or place. This means that you have to make a constant effort to map the game, since it is rather easy to rely on GO TO and FOLLOW to move you about the place. Although convenient, it does somehow spoil the joy of exploration.

There are several opportunities for combat, but this is limited to simple cut-and-slash with no chance to dictate tactics other than deciding whether or not to accept your opponent's surrender. If you die, Merlin immediately resurrects you somewhere else.

What's

THE ACE VERDICT?

We're going to try an experiment in The Pilgrim column for a couple of months. Your letters will determine whether we make it a permanent feature:

Basically, the Pilg feels that there is a problem with ratings of adventure games. For some months now I've had difficulties assigning a rating to games that gives a proper guide to the quality of a title.

Take *Lancelot*, for example. It's pretty obvious that I was disappointed by the product, but the fact remains that even a poor Level 9 product is technically very advanced as far as adventures go. To give it a rating of, say, 500, would be misleading. On the other hand, to rate it 800 or above would be equally misleading.

What it all boils down is that adventures are becoming better and better technically, so that reviewing them becomes more and more a subjective, rather than a technical, evaluation. Take books, for example. You can criticise the writing style, the conception, and the structure of a book, but no literary critic would ever dream of giving a definitive rating for, say, the latest novel by Ruth Rendell.

So what's to do? As an experiment, the Pilg is going to abandon the ACE rating and substitute instead a short summing up of his personal opinion, entitled the ACE Verdict. We'll still keep the four separate ratings for Landscape, Encounters, Challenge, and System since these are useful for assessing the technical basis of a game. Please write in and tell me what you think of this new system and whether you'd like to see it continued, or perhaps replaced by something else.

Just to remind you, while we're on the subject, what the four tech ratings stand for...

LANDSCAPE deals with the complexity of the map, its size, and its structure. A simple two dimensional map with little description, few locations, and no surprises is going to score badly here.

ENCOUNTERS tells you the quality of interaction between the player and the characters in the game. Are they fully described, functional, interactive, and well-programmed. Do the characters talk, or just stand there. Do they move about? Do they appear 'intelligent'? There's still a long way to go here for most adventure software houses.

CHALLENGE. Is the game a walk-through, or a real mind-bender. Illogical puzzles don't score so highly here, however, even if they baffle you for days (which they probably will).

SYSTEM. Are there containers? High-level commands? RAMsave? Function keys? etc etc. The hotter the coding and the better the design, the higher the rating.

THE PILG thrilled to the news that Psygnosis were producing their first real adventure, complete with icon-control, text descriptions, and even a spot of time travel. All, however, is not as it seems...

First, the game was not programmed by the lads who brought you *Barbarian* and *Te r-roropods*. It comes from fair France, Pilglings, that Gallic place responsible for things like *Mortville Manor* and *Crash Garrett*. In other words, games that look the bizz but don't quite have the gameplay to match the graphics.

The idea behind *Chronoquest* is simple – back in 1922 your dad has invented a time machine and disappeared. The plot is complicated by the fact that you are being accused of your father's murder, whereas evidence



CHRONOQUEST

PSYGNOSIS head back in time...

suggests that in fact another baddy is responsible. You must search the time zones for clues and people who can help you put the world to rights.

This vaguely *Lords of Time*-ish scenario is complemented by superlative graphics and some very nice music. That's the good news. The rest, alas, is mostly bad – for Amiga owners, anyway.

To start with, the control system is extremely limited. The game is entirely icon-driven and commands are limited to the basic get, drop, use, and look. You can also hit and push/pull where appropriate to bash foes and

response whatsoever. such responses as there are are hardly overflowing with detail.

OK, so we expect this from icon-driven games, but there's worse to come. The Amiga version (see below about the ST game) is very slow, with occasional screen flickers. It is full of bad English and awkward phrasing. It is inconsistent in operation – for example, examining one item in your inventory may get you the response I BEG YOUR PARDON, examining another gets no response at all.

Even worse, the system of getting and dropping objects is awkward in the extreme. To get an object you have to click on it using the GET icon – no problem. To drop it, however, you click on the DROP icon and then click on the object in your inventory you want to drop. Where does it go? Good question, fellow Pilgs. It vanisheth into thinnere aire. To get it back, you are in theory supposed to click on

some area at the bottom of the screen. Sometimes this works, sometimes it appears not to. In one location, I dropped a letter and when I tried to get it back was rewarded with...a rope! Extraordinary, dear Watson.

This is the sort of game that people drool at frantically at computer shows. It looks great, but it plays...ergh! The problem isn't one of bugs, exactly, but simply one of obscurity. The instructions are faulty, the program isn't terribly consistent, and the player gets just a teensy-weensy bit overheated. Unfortunately its greatest strengths – the pics and music – lead you to expect a level of programming expertise that you won't get – at least not on the Amiga version.

The ST version, on the other hand, is rumoured to be a rock-solid affair. Unfortunately we didn't get it for review, but stand by for next month's update. ●

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THE ACE VERDICT

For your money you get some great graphics and an awful lot of frustration. The ST version sounds OK, but the Amiga version is a seriously untidy product.

LANDSCAPE 89 SYSTEM 35
CHALLENGE 75 ENCOUNTERS 22

open drawers, cupboards and the like. Most puzzles are solved by having (a) an object and (b) an item to USE it on. This means that search-and-select is the order of the day.

Unfortunately, on the Amiga version, this process comes tumbling down. You search a location by selecting the examine icon and then clicking somewhere on the screen. The responses are not often helpful and sometimes downright misleading. Even worse, the program requires you to get the mouse pointer in exactly the right place, otherwise you get no

THE PILGRIM'S GUIDE TO THE PAWN

■ The Final Part

So you're in Hell. You can ask the Devil about various subjects, but best to check his views on the wrist-band first. Once you've been zapped, make sure you get the white out of the pouch before venturing north across the rope bridge.

To avoid being eaten by the dragon, shine the white at the shadows, and then point at the shapes. Weep not over the hobbits – they deserve everything they get.

Once you've chucked your weapon at Kronos, grab his soul with the aerosoul (make sure you press the nozzle) and then wear his clothes and get the wand.

The idea here is to make yourself look like the wizard so that the dragon won't eat you. Actually, you don't have to go back to Hell past the dragon – there is another route via the flying stone slab, but why bother?

Don't dally with the Devil, or he'll fry you. Get the white again, then W.S.W. to the shaft. Go up the shaft to the double doors, then west to the ledge, then get rope and climb up it. The remaining five points to make 350 come from planting the plant in the pot with the trowel. The finale of the game comes when you knock on the perspex doors and answer NO, I AM NOT WEARING THE WRISTBAND. The doors will open and take you into another world. As a special bonus, if you type DEBUG, you can become invulnerable and return The Pawn without fear of the dragon, the devil, or whatever. Why not rescue the princess after all?



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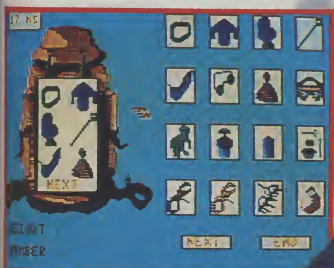
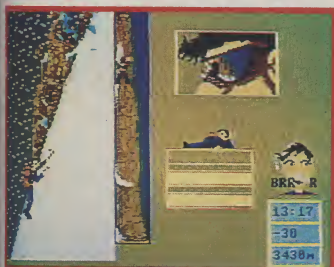
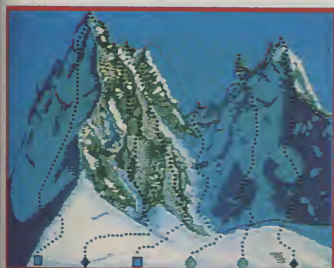
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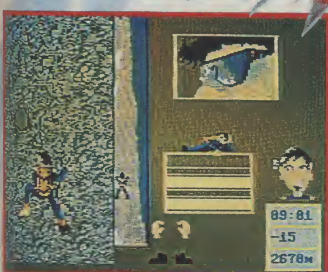
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LORDS OF TIME PLAYERS' GUIDE

BY THE PALADIN

PART 1 Lords of Time, one of Level 9's early classics, has seen something of a revival after being revamped and included in their latest Time and Magik trilogy. So let's play it again...shall we?



I hope you won't need any help getting as far as the inside of the time-piece? Good. Once inside, get the ticker going so you can get out again, (The clock seems to suffer from an identity crisis and thinks it's Dr Who's Tardis. To travel between the time-zones turn one of the numbered cogs, then swing the obvious, then go out. The cogs should be taken in ascending order, with one exception, which I'll tell you about later.)

First, you should find yourself at the end of a driveway. A wander round this quaint bijou cottage should be well rewarded, and make sure you get something to keep your hands free for later on. (There are valuable treasures to collect throughout the game, but these, in the main, are not necessary to finish the adventure. Is it valuable? Examine it and see.)

Before taking in the garden, go and get toolled up at the road works down the lane. Back at the garden you'll need something that... To reach the keys you'll have to do a vain person a good turn first, and let him admire himself. To find him promenade along the stream at the bottom of the garden, and bridge it upstream.

Once you've got inside the shed, make sure you take everything. One object is essential for later problems and the other is used to put an old man (the willow) out of his misery.

Take a short cut back to the clock, along the outside of the cottage. At the compost heap, eat the mushrooms, and gain a little insight. Finally, at the carport, nick the petrol can and take a look at the bottom of the Porsche.

Back at the clock drop everything valuable, but take what you picked (pun) up at the road works. Bong! It's a bit chilly here in the ice ages. When you are trapped by the woolly elephant, light a fire with the fuel and scrap wood. The frightened mammoth leaves some things behind. To get further you'll have to be kinder to another member of the animal kingdom – you did bring the cat food didn't you? A sore point may find a better home in the compost – but remember to haggle with the tooth fairy, so you can shine light on later problems.

Now that the tiger's been placated you can wander round the caves. You'll need to break the ice a couple of times and make some ice to walk across. Release the queen and she will give you something which is useful to another member of royalty later on. That wraps it up here so take a short cut south, down the tunnel.

More next month. See previous page for final solution to Ye Pawn – long awaited by many patient Pilgs who have been robbed of their victory by shortage of space...

NO PROBLEM!

Once again, fellow Pilgs come to the aid of those in distress. This month's Truly Virtuous Ones include: **Jason Hand, Mark Coleman, Ross Halliday, and Wayne Piper.**

KINGS QUEST 2

Leave cupboard open in wizard's bedroom, then look behind it to find magic map.

To dodge wizard on the pirate's ship, stay on the ladder.

To defeat the dragon, use the storm brew.

BEYOND ZORK

To earn more compassion, use the levitation to lift the baby hungus from the quicksand.

Jump off the infinitely long bridge using the umbrella.

CORRUPTION

Open cistern in cubicle and search it.

Smash Volvo window with screwdriver from glove compartment.

Theresa leaves her office at 10.00 – get brass key from her drawer and enter David's office.

When Nurse Stephenson leaves the ward, get up, get the papers and pillow case from under the empty bed, then go to operating theatre, get bandage, and wear it.

Put all except papers into pillow case and lie on bed. When in ambulance, remove clothes from pillow case and put them on. Remove bandage. Get up, open ambulance doors, and jump for it!

SHADOWGATE

Operate hammer on middle mirror in mirror room.

Operate spear on troll.

Operate 'key to the world' scroll on globe.

Kill girl in turret with silver arrow.

Operate star on wyvern in turret.

Operate right panel in throne room.

DEJA VU

Operate card on slot in lift and on wall.

Operate syringe on container marked **BISODIUMITIS**, then operate syringe on self.

Syringe fat lady with sodium pentathol.



CONTACTING THE PILG...Fancy seeing your name on these pages? Fancy making friends around the world? Don't forget that the Pilg is always looking for letters from fellow adventurers, hints and tips, and correspondence on any adventure-related subject.

The address to write to is: **THE PILGRIM, ACE MAGAZINE, 4 QUEEN STREET, BATH, BA1 1EJ.**

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Atari ST screen shots

JEAN-MICHEL JARRE

IN CONCERT

When Jean-Michel Jarre said he wanted to gather 2,500 technicians, 200 musicians, 40 tons of generators, scores of searchlights, lasers and slide projectors and a stage full of synthesizers and computers together for an open-air concert in London's Docklands, people said he was mad.

They were right – he was. Anyone else would have taken the English weather into account (if it was meant to be a summer concert, why wasn't it HELD in the summer?) but Jarre's self-deprecating joke about Frogs liking the rain did little to console an audience sitting watching his mega-show in a blast of freezing droplets. And those were the press seats, carefully chosen by the organisers to afford a view of only half the show – most of the public, who had paid a mere £15 for their tickets as opposed to £30 for the uncovered grandstands (only Princess Di got to have a bit of plastic sheeting over her head) had the pleasure of standing up for a few hours to try to get a good view as well.

Luckily the organisers had managed to thwart them by placing Jarre's stage at one side of the massive Royal Victoria Docks while the audience watched from the other side, hundreds of yards away. This made it a spot difficult to assess the stage setup, with its stacks of keyboards, sequencers and computers, and even more difficult to see the

point of having dancers and other performers on stage when even Jarre himself was just a tiny mauve-coloured spot in the distance. Careful use of 300-millimetre lens (just the sort of thing the average member of the audience is likely to be carrying in his back pocket) made it possible to see just a little more.

But of course, the main action was going on in the sky and all around on the building of the Docklands, with their huge projected images created to accompany the themes of Jarre's new album, 'Revolutions'. Three main revolutions were being portrayed – the industrial revolution which created the Docklands in the first place, and which was '60's, represented mainly by stills from TV shows such as *The Man From Uncle*, *Danger Man*, and *The Saint* – and the telecommunications revolution of the '80's, represented by satellite dishes, astronauts and Jarre's computer-generated vocals.

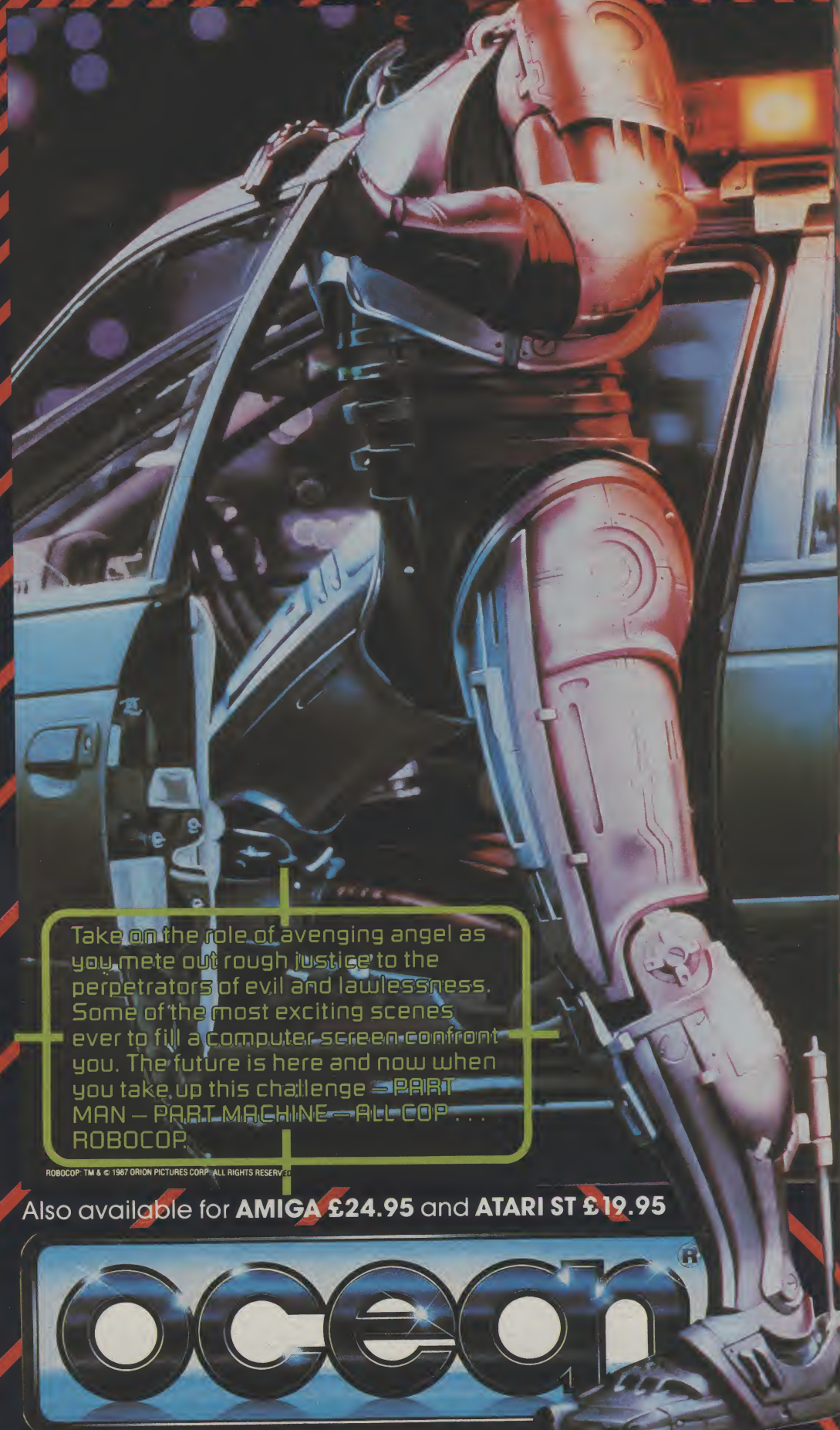
The album itself makes for uneasy listening, with sampled metallic sound courtesy of the Series III Fairlight, Akai 5900 and other instruments mixing to ethnic vocals, digital



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and analog synth sweeps and a few of the rolling sequences which characterise Jarre's more up-tempo material. But there's little in the way of memorable melody there, and the older material from the 'Oxygene' and 'Equinoxe' LPs stood up much better on the night. That's not to say that the music was reproduced unconvincingly - it all got very close to the album versions, but that may have been something to do with the three 24-track tape machines whirring away behind the giant three-tier floating stage.

MUSIC, MAESTRO, PLEASE...

Jarre's role during the concert was more that of a conductor than a musician, with his control centre supposedly collating the action of the lights, lasers, slide projectors and music. During the Houston concert he played some parts from a modified Yamaha KX5 remote keyboard strapped around his neck, but for this show he'd had a grotesque new device built - all poking out bits of metal, wonky keys and microphones on the end of a pointed stick. Still, it all managed to fool the Radio 1 DJ who hosted the show on its first night radio transmission and whose gullibility was matched only by his lack of knowledge of modern musical instruments (what the hell is a 'Sonovox' anyway?).

What's certain is this; the 100-odd choir really were singing, the drummer Joe Hammer was battering away for a least part of

the time on his large Simmons-based kit, and at least one of the synth players Dominique Perrier (anyone out there got the old 'Space Art' albums he recorded?), Michel Geiss, Sylvain Durand and Francis Rimbert was visible complete with remote keyboard and computer monitor. Hank Marvin (yes, Hank Marvin from The Shadows) put in an appearance on guitar, and the TV lighting generally got in the way of any possible view by cantilevering around the stage and plonking itself in front of the musicians.

Jarre's famed Laser harp sequence, which is more interesting visually than musically, was rendered almost totally pointless by the fact that smoke and rain made both musician and beams (and even the shining asbestos gloves which supposedly have to be worn when cutting the powerful laser beams to trigger off the synthesizers) effectively invisible, and while the effect of the ex-WW2 searchlights playing on the underside of the low clouds was breathtaking, it was ironic that those same clouds spend most of their evening dropping freezing water on the audience. And it's the nature of the audience which makes the whole Docklands Debacle so depressing. Like the Hous-

ton and Lyon concerts, Destination Docklands was intended for the people - with a privileged few paying spectacle to the concert from points all along the Thames. But the very layout of the concert, which seemed to be a closely-guarded secret even from the press until just before the event, made sure that this was impossible. Even discounting the safety objections from Newham Council which led to the show being cancelled just days before its original date (organisers didn't even have a license at that stage), the fact is that there were very few angles from which the show could be seen outside the dock itself. But the whole thing will probably look brilliant on television later this year, with the raindrops electronically edited out and big close-ups of the stage - a pity they couldn't project a few for the paying customers on the night.

So Jean-Michel bringing high-technology music to the people? Hardly. But in the programme for the concert there was a full-page advert for the new Vangelis album, 'Direct', which isn't being promoted by any mega-concert but which steps out on a limb by including TUNES. Now THAT's bringing high-tech music to the people.



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INTRO MCMXCIX...

In case you hadn't twigged, MCMXCIX stands for 1999, and it would take until then to look at all the music software available through this extremely go-ahead London based company.

Sure, there are other software specialists such as Syndromic Music (who handle the Hybrid Arts lines), but no-one else has quite the range of MCM, who stock scores of software packages for the Atari ST, Commodore Amiga, Apple, Macintosh, IBM PC and compatibles, with Archimedes packages already on their way. Most of these lines are American, from companies such as Dr T, Passport, Soundquest and Intelligent Music, but there are several British lines such as Pandora coming up, and inevitably the Archimedes lines will be UK-based since the machine has hardly taken off in the States.

We've taken a look recently at several packages from MCM's range, covering sequence composition, scoring, sample editing and graphics-to-sound conversion, and will be reviewing them in detail in the coming months. Prices for the entire MCM range are from as little as £42.95 (for Opcode's Amiga MusicMouse) to as much as £475 for Cue 2.0, a film score preparation package which runs on the Mac.

INTELLIGENT MUSIC MIDIDRAW Atari ST £89.95

MIDIDraw is STRANGE. It's conceived partly in the tradition of Intelligent Music's more expensive "M!" package, which is an "Intelligent auto-composer", taking your input in the form of a few notes and turning out variations, accompaniments and all sorts of inversions and extended possibilities.

MIDIDraw has some of the same possibilities, but takes graphic patterns on the screen as its starting point. You draw on the main part of the screen using the mouse, in a choice of orange or grey-blue, and every pixel plays a note on connected MIDI synths or modules (so you won't even need a music keyboard to use this one).

Pixels further to the left of the screen play higher notes (the overall octave can also be set) and pixels higher up the screen play louder notes - so by scribbling square or circles you can create scales, trills and arpeggios. There are four miniature control panels on the screen at all times, and the first of these sets the MIDI channel your notes go out on, the volume and length of notes, and the speed at which notes repeat if you hold the mouse still. Obviously it's up to you to choose a suitable sound on the synth to interpret the sorts of squiggles you want to create.

The second control panel creates delays of up to two seconds and repeats the notes you create on the same synth with the same noise, or on a different synth (or a different MIDI channel of the same multi-timbral synth) with a different noise and maybe a transposition up to another key. The third control panel is a data recorder - any notes you input are played back initially with

equal spacing and will continue to loop if you wish, so you can create repeated sequences (or even drum patterns if you have a set of drum sounds loaded up on your synth or sampler) and play along with them. The recorder also allows you to change tempo, play back in Real Time (that is, timed exactly as you entered the notes), skip a set percentage of notes, or randomise the playback of notes.

The final control panel, the Interpreter, will create its own musical patterns by scanning any picture on screen and playing a note each time it encounters denser sets of pixels, and the Interpreter can play up to four notes at a time - it's the only polyphonic part of the package.

You can save a Snapshot, which is a complete control set up for four panels, or a Movie, which is a complete live performance using the Mouse. And that's about as far as it goes - after that, it's up to you to choose interesting sounds, perform in musically useful manner, and make something of the results.

MIDIDraw music files are compatible with "M!" and with Dr.T's Keyboard controlled Sequencer, Passport's Master Tracks Pro, Steinberg's Pro 24 and lots of other Atari packages. But if you're really interested in converting graphics to some kind of musical interpretation, you'll probably be frustrated by the simplicity of the graphic input; only two colours, no advanced functions such as circle and line drawing, and no compatibility with the obvious arts packages such as Degas and Neochrome. It's all very well stretching your musical interests to include graphics, but MIDIDraw unfortunately won't do much for those who want to stretch their graphics interests to include music.

DR.T'S "KEYS" Atari ST £79.95

"Keys" (let's drop the exclamation mark from now on, OK?) is a basic composer and music score creator which should work well for anyone interested in creating musical pieces and seeing them printed out on paper. It's also compatible with Dr.T's MPE (Multi-Program Environment) system, and so can run simultaneously in your micro with a more powerful Dr. T sequencer such as KCS (Keyboard Controlled Sequencer) and with synth and sample editors; so you should be able to create a new sound on your synth, compose a piece of music with it, and print out in standard musical notation without once having to reach for your reset button.

To concentrate on Keys itself, we find most of the functions on a single page with none of the usual Atari GEM layout in sight (as usual with Dr.T packages). In fact Keys is written completely in GFA BASIC, and while this doesn't make it particularly slow and clunky, there are some applications which are slightly irregular in operation, as the handbook admits; this is usually the case when you ask the package to play notes and constantly update the screen display at

the same time. If you move the mouse in Auto Compose Mode (which we'll look at in a moment), for instance, the playback slows down.

You can enter notes into Keys using the mouse or a MIDI keyboard, and it's possible to enter single notes or whole chords, either one note at a time or by defining the chord you want and entering the root note. Once you've entered a short phrase you can repeat it as many times as you like, with any transpositions you like, and then play it back either on a synth or on the built-in voice chip (as long as you don't try to use more than three notes at a time in the latter case). The on-screen keyboard flashes the notes played if desired - a useful teaching aid.

Notes of any length together with rests can be entered on what's known in musical terms as Grand Staff - in other words, a double stave covering the usual range of grand piano. The Edit box lets you change any note, or its duration, or its velocity (volume or tone on velocity-responsive synths) so keys doesn't require you to be a brilliant keyboard player to prepare and play back quite complex pieces.

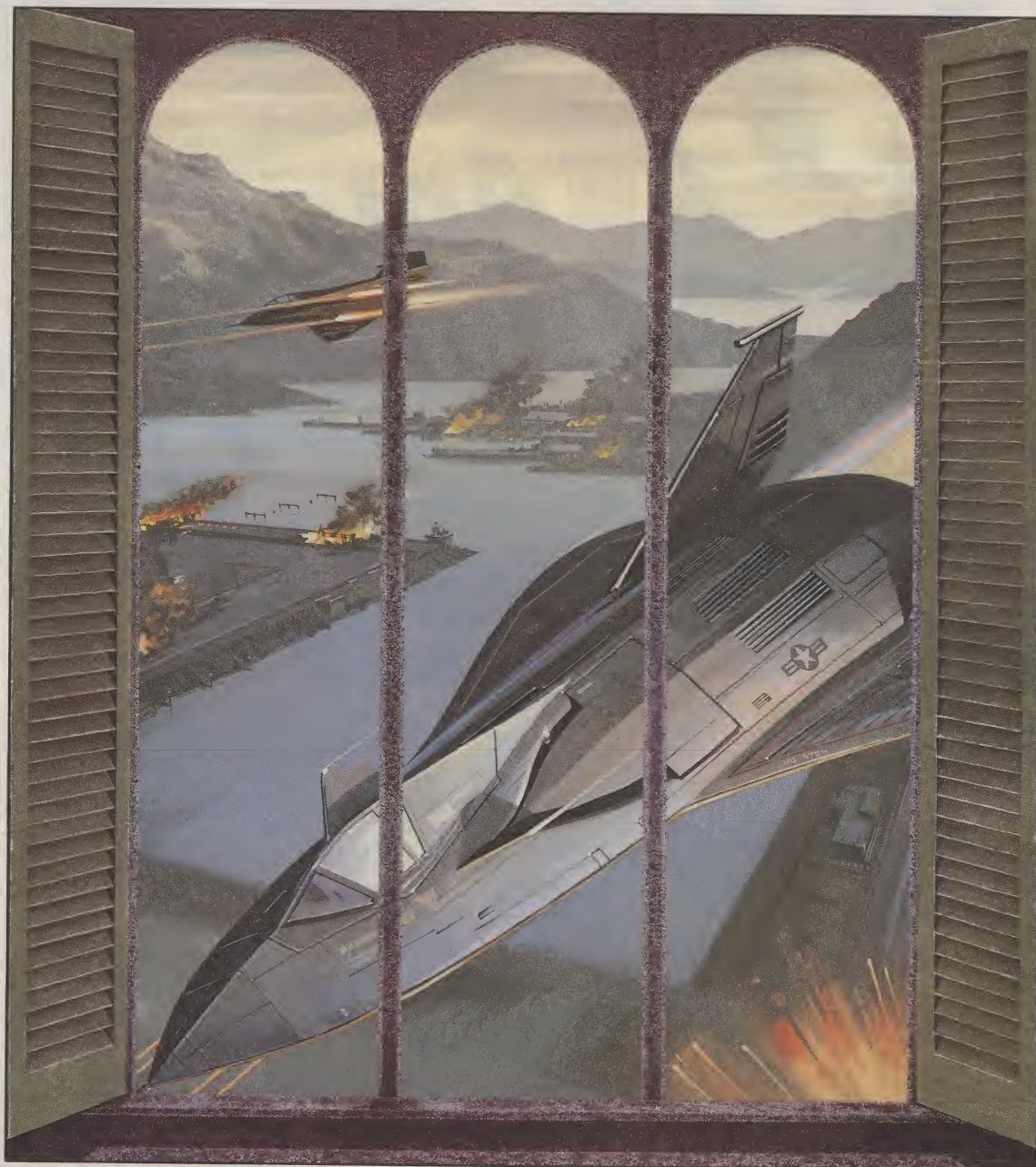
One major feature of keys which may appear hidden at first is the Auto Composer, which makes up its own music based on parameters you provide. Going into Auto Compose Mode causes a new screen to appear with twelve parameter settings ranging from Key Change Frequency, Chord Degree Change Frequency, and Harmonic Tension Maximum to more obvious settings such as Melody and Harmony Octave and MIDI Channels.

Simple applications of the Auto-Composer give results like 1950's computer music - quick runs, trills and wobbles which you probably won't find very inspiring or useful. But after a while (a longer while than devoted to looking at the package) you'll probably find the Auto-Composer coming up with passages interesting enough to catch your attention and for you to save away and use in your compositions.

You can print your finished pieces two musical lines at a time on a dot matrix or Atari laser printer, with a SEQ-TO-ALL routine making keys files compatible with the more professional Dr. T Copyist package as well. The ALL-TO-SEQ file make the products of Keys compatible with Dr T's Music Recording Studio sequencer, which we'll look at another time.

The main problems with Keys are that the layout is very fiddly and that consequently you won't get into it very quickly - although aimed at the beginner and expert alike, the package looks complex enough to put off either. But there's no denying that it's a relatively inexpensive and effective way of getting basic musical scores composed and printed out, with a helpful routine to cope with failing inspiration thrown in for good measure.

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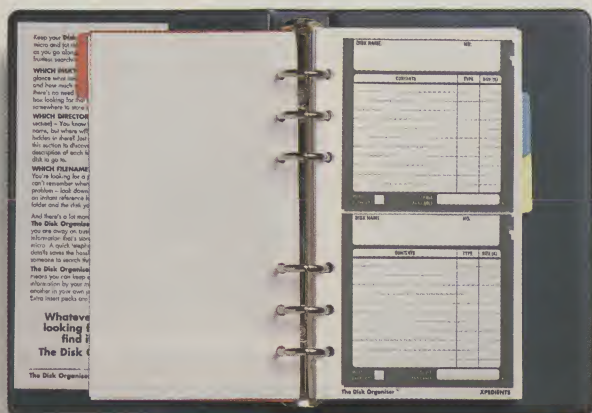
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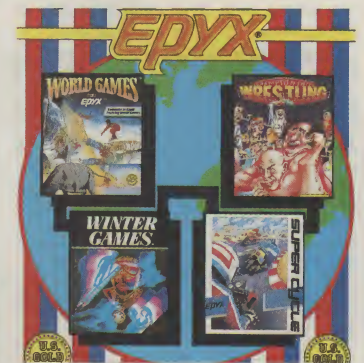
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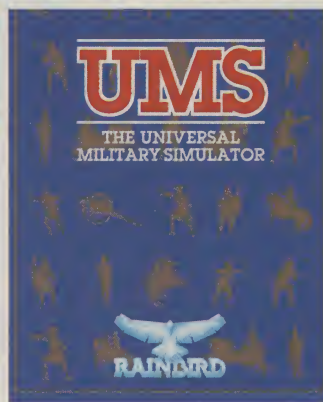
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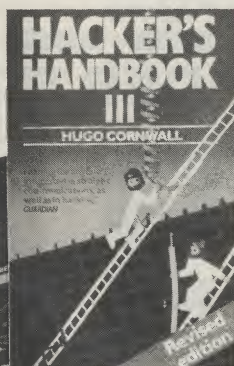
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In the true spirit of heroic failures, near misses and total foul-ups, we present a set of alternative awards for your amusement. Barkie the dog says "ruff"...



GAMES THAT CLOSED A COMPANY

Hot contenders on this front include megagames *Bander-snatch* and *Psyclipse* from the original Imagine (but fire extinguisher fights in the office, a company-wide penchant for fast vehicles and the basic problem of selling more games than there were computers to play them on were other contributory factors). Then of course there was *Souls of Darkon* from Taskset, the arcade action masters who were 'really proud' that they were doing their first adventure. Little did they know, it was to be their last game.

Hi-Fi journalist turned software impresario John Peel made a fortune with *Valhalla* through his company Legend, and went on to hype *The Great Space Race* beyond the bounds of human endeavour, secured megabucks in advance orders and then went to ground soon after the game was released once people worked out how amazingly appalling it really was. A new all-time low for quality of packaging, instructions, artwork, programming and gameplay was reached with *TGSR*, and even today there's rumoured to be a somewhat miserable cardboard box manufacturer in Essex with something like 100,000 empty *TGSR* boxes in his warehouse. The whereabouts of John Peel remain uncertain...

Perhaps bravest and daftest fatal game concept was *The Shadow of The Unicorn* – a game from Mikro-Gen which came with its own hardware add-on for the Spectrum that acted as a copy protection dongle, dedicated joystick interface and memory expansion. Sadly, the game written to take advantage of the extra memory was just a fairly run-of-the-mill effort, no different from any other mediocre Spectrum game except that there was much more of it, it cost twice as much as most other Spectrum games and was unattractive to the retail trade – retailers made as much profit on a £7.95 game as they did on

Shadow. Mikro-Gen faded away not long after their unicorn.

Grossest foul-up of all time (so far) must be the series of TV tie-ins produced by MacSen, a company partly funded by the Welsh Development Agency. Picking on the sound idea of producing official versions of mega-popular TV games they went on to release titles such as *Treasure Hunt*, *Blockbusters*, *Countdown*, *Bullseye* et al, finally expiring with *Eastenders*. Despite the poor programming, MacSen should have been sitting on a goldmine – except they apparently negotiated generous royalties based on percentages of the retail price for the game concepts, music and cover illustrations. Royalties that were so generous, that MacSen could have been making a loss of 10% of the retail price on some titles once software wholesalers had been given their discount margin...



OVERALL LOSER

The Welsh Development Agency, via MacSen



COSTLY GAMES THAT NEVER MADE IT

A five – or maybe even six figure sum was written off by Rainbird Software a couple of years ago, when they pulled the plug on *Reach For The Moon*, a mega-project commissioned from ODE. In sheer financial terms, *Reach For The Moon* might well be the most expensive software abortion so far. Elite spent a lot of money and many programmer-hours on a team led by Richard Wilcox trying to produce an 8-bit cinematic version of *Scooby Doo* in 1986 and 1987 before admitting defeat, abandoning their losses and

handing the licence over to Gargoyle to produce a playable and saleable game. More recently, Activision apparently spent another five-figure sum discovering that *Lock On* couldn't really be effected on the C64 before abandoning the idea, and Martech put their naval-strategy-game-with-arcade-overtones project, *Nimitz* on what appears to be permanent hold, after previewing it at the 1987 PCW show.

Then there was *Willy Meets The Taxman*, a Matthew Smith game intended to solve Matthew 'Jet Set Willy' Smith's tax problems which never materialised, and of course Elite's 8-bit computer version of the pencil-and-paper classic, *Battleships*. Originally intended (and



advertised) as a full-price, mainstream release, *Battleships* saw the light of day as a freebie magazine covermount and popped onto an Elite compilation the other Christmas, but never came out of the closet on its own account.



WHITE ELEPHANT OF ALL TIME AWARD

Rainbird, for Reach For The Moon, a real Apollo 13 of a game.



SLOW GAMES A' COMIN'

The dark days of Ocean were bright days for magazine publishers – nearly a year's worth of colour pages heralded the continually-delayed arrival of *Street Hawk* and *Knight Rider*. Multiple re-writes (which lead to one early version supplied via a mail-order catalogue) followed multiple re-writes until Ocean could finally delay no longer and released a pair of games that achieved the most disparate ratio between advertising spend and game quality ever seen before or since. Ocean learnt several lessons during this period according to Gary Bracey, Ocean's Software Manager, and has done things very differently ever since.

Amongst other slowcoaches there was *Star Trek*, acquired by Telecomsoft, announced in 1986, and previewed at the PCW Show of that year on a Starship Enterprise stand with gorgeous pouting nymphettes and not a moving screen in sight. Originally planned for a Christmas release on nearly all formats, all that ever arrived was the ST version, earlier this year, by which time early versions and demos of the game had been broadcast widely on the pirate circuit.



BROKEN TRANSPORTER AWARD

Star Trek



GAMES WITH 12 PENALTY POINTS ON THEIR LICENCE

Given the size and profile of the Eastenders audience... but we've already covered that one.

Still on the Beeb front, there was *Dr Who*, produced by BBC software specialists Micropower as their first major foray away from the BBC computer. The Micropowers that were, believed their Spectrum, Commodore and CPC programmers and booked the adverts. A clear six months after the five-figure adspend had run its course, the C64 and CPC versions of the game eked their way out. All Micropower needed was a Tardis, and things could have turned out fine and dandy.

Friday The 13th had all the ingredients for a rip-roaring licenced game – blood, gore, frantic action, tension and a hit series of movies, albeit with 18 certification. Unfortunately, Domark (in their naive period), hired a team of educational programmers to do the deed, and no amount of in-pack blood capsules and gory artwork could make up for the axe-wielding stickman on screen supposed to be Jason. If this was state of the art, the art was Primary School.

Sharing the 1986 PCW Show with *Star Trek* was another fledgeling turkey, this time one that was tied in to a mega-successful TV series and promoted by a leading software house as one of its great upcoming games. The company? Melbourne House. The product? *Inspector Gadget*. Despite the attributes of the central licenced character, the programmers and game designers proved clueless, and this planned full-price release slithered out quietly, after some delay, as a budget release from Mastertronic.

Honourable mention for accruing penalty points on a licence must go to Argus Press Software for *Max Headroom* – the game came rather late, and had little to do with the cult figure that fronted the TV series or featured in the movie. Powerful marketing and PR saved the day, however, with sycophantic magazine editors queuing up to put Max on their front covers.

But for overall dis-service to licences, Piranha must take the biscuit. Snapping up a host of valuable licences to IPC comic characters, includ-

ing Roy of the Rovers and a clutch of 2000AD characters (collected for a mere £1,000 apiece, so the rumour has it), Piranha spent a lot of time and money developing games before parent company Macmillan pulled the plug out of the aquarium asphyxiating Piranha and leaving the licences high and dry. So far, Gremlin have picked up Roy, but as for the rest...



GREEDIEST SPOILSPORTS

The ravenous Piranha



PRE-RELEASE NERVES

In their formative years, Domark underwent "an expensive learning process" according to Dominic Wheatley. After grabbing a James Bond licence for their second game, the Domarks were apparently told by game designer David Bishop that the *View To A Kill* game design would fit on the Spectrum 'no problem'. Two weeks before the launch, the Spectrum ran out of memory and gameplay 'had to be lopped out', leading to a very different game to the ones released for other machines. And last-minute litigation turned *Splitting Images* into *Split Personalities*.

Activision had a few problems with their mega-hit *Ghostbusters* on the Spectrum – in the rush to get the game into the shops in time for Christmas, they forgot to check whether it worked with a Kempston Interface. The Kempston joystick interface was, and still is, the most popular joystick add-on in the land of Spectrum gaming, so you would have thought...

Think again. The first version of Spectrum *Ghostbusters* loaded fine with a Kempston interface attached to the computer, but select the appropriate joystick option and the ghost in the machine caused a crash. And who wants a crash? Thousands of games had to be replaced.

US Gold's 1986 *World Cup Carnival* disappointment saw lots of football fans paying for and playing a game they already had. Much disgruntlement. The official version of the fiasco involves US Gold being let down at the last

NEVER MIND THE GAMEPLAY, FEEL THE PERIPHERAL

Only two worthy contenders in this field – a driving sim and a surfing sim. Spirit Software sold a plucky steering wheel with their Formula racing game for the Spectrum and you looked a real James Hunt rolling it left and right across the top row of keys. Not surprisingly, the game never really caught on, later reappearing in a very similar incarnation on the Mastertronic label.

Overall winner has to be *Surfchamp*, from New Concepts – another company partly funded by a Development Agency, this time the Irish one. Available initially only for the rubber-keyed Speccy, you needed to stick a little plastic fulcrum over the central key on the keyboard, balance a little plastic surfboard on it and actually ride the waves with your fingertips. Grotty graphics, unpolished gameplay, and awful advertising artwork didn't help the product sell at £12.00-odd. After a short while, New Concepts apparently withdrew from the games market...



POTTIEST PERIPHERAL

New Concepts' six-inch surfboard



moment by a team of programmers, and being forced to cast around for a passable football game that could quickly be enhanced and included with the posters and other goodies in the *World Cup Carnival* package. Step forward Artic, with an ancient soccer game. Handier than Maradonna, that US Gold crew, many people said at the time...



MOST ARTFUL SAVE OF THE SEASON AWARD

US Gold, who sold loads of copies of their last-minute solution to a painful problem, even though many customers were left sick as parrots.



GAMES WITH SOMETHING MISSING

Ignoring the claims to infamy of a host of arcade conversions and a small army of mediocre releases that could well have been so much better 'if only...', a few releases make the shortlist.

When the company still had all the software inexperience suggested by its name, Virgin released a cricket game that was not only tedious but basically incompetent. BASICally incompetent, indeed – much of the user interface involved hacking into the BASIC and changing the contents of variables, but at least the game conveniently crashed into BASIC to make the player's life easier.

More recently, and during the life of ACE, we have been treated to *Eco* – a wonderfully pretty game from the Dentons, published by Ocean, but a game that cunningly avoids gameplay. It isn't a difficult game to play. In fact there's no point in playing it – if you realised what the aim of the game was when you started, it would probably only take about half-an-hour to complete, but as you don't get tipped off when you start, it takes about 4 hours to realise that YES, that's all there is to it.

And of course there's *Kwasimodo* from Robtek, for the Amiga, the game which has

attracted the lowest ACE rating so far.

But for real crap verging on the Kitsch, Firebird's compilation entitled *Don't Buy This* cleans up in this category. Released as a deliberate laugh in the early days of Firebird, when all they published was budget software, this was a collection of 'Sunday Sport' games – games that were so bad, they were almost good. There was a dog, that had to duck flying obstacles, and to duck it had to stand up because it was tallest when it sat down. Then there was the go-kart simulation, writ-

ten by Tony Rainbird (the man who went on to set up Rainbird software for Telecomsoft), where the controls reversed as you went round a bend on the track. A delicious set of awful games, sold under an honest title for a fair price.



DON'T BUY THIS AWARD:

Don't Buy This from Firebird

GREAT MARKETING DISASTERS

Imagine, first time around.

Apart from that, well-intentioned budget house Codemasters wrote a special game for the *Race Against Time* appeal, got lots of coverage including TV airtime for the project, released the game and shot themselves in the fund-raising foot by forgetting to clear the rights to the picture used on the inlay. The estate of Jesse Owens, the black athlete featured on the cover, hadn't been approached for permission to use the pic, and declined to give permission retrospectively. Cue total recall of distributed games and delays while the inlays were reprinted. By the time the game was on the shelves, everyone had nearly forgotten about it...

Poor old Prism Leisure snapped up the rights to a brand-new, destined-to-be-a-cult boardgame, *Eye*, and produced a more than competent computer version. Packaging it in an innovative and eye-catching manner (the box was praised by the Design Council), they sat back and confidently awaited mega-sales. Sadly, the computer game didn't prove to be a massive hit – nor was the boardgame. Few people managed to play the original, let alone the computer game: the problem was so acute that Virgin Books even published a "how to" book on *Eye*, but it was too late to save the game...

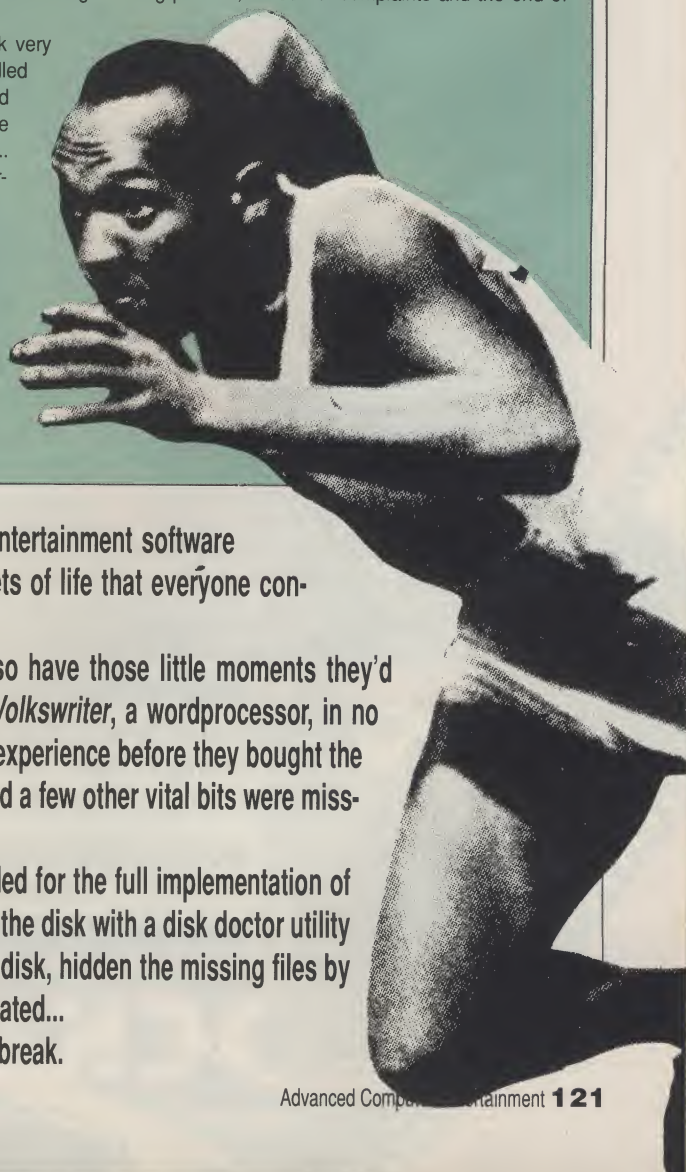
And when it came to presenting the image of his company, System 3, at the PCW Show some three years ago, Mark Cale had a problem. Bereft of games, all he could come up with was a bunch of scantily-clad bimbettes who pranced around suggestively on his stand at three-hourly intervals to a throbbing beat. Cue large crowds of tongue-lolling punters, hordes of complaints and the end of the bimbo show.

But then Ferrari-driving Mark very nearly launched a game called *Twister*, *Mother of Harlots* and was only saved when someone told him what a harlot was... Enter *Twister*, *Mother of Harlotte*.



THE MARK CALE AWARD FOR GOOD TASTE IN MARKETING:

Mark Cale



And finally (adopts a Dennis Norden voice), it's not just the world of entertainment software that suffers from those embarrassing little bloopers, those little snippets of life that everyone concerned wishes could be edited out. Certainly not.

The 'suits' over in the world of spreadsheet-serious software also have those little moments they'd rather forget. Like the marketing people who put a free demo disk of *Volkswriter*, a wordprocessor, in no less than 80,000 copies of a magazine, inviting readers to get hands-on experience before they bought the full version. The demo version was 'crippled' – you couldn't print out, and a few other vital bits were missing. Or were they?

As many readers discovered to their amazement, all the files needed for the full implementation of *Volkswriter* were on the freebie disk – all you needed to do was examine the disk with a disk doctor utility and 'undelete' them. Silly boys had merely taken a standard *Volkswriter* disk, hidden the missing files by changing their attributes under MSDos, and sent the disk off to be duplicated...

And on that note, viewers, it's time to hand over to the commercial break.

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ROCKET RANGER

In comes a new Editor, and out go some of the old ways. Prize-hunters scanning the letters pages this month to see if they have collected some free software will look in vain. Playing the role of Ace Axe Man, Graeme Kidd sorts through the postbag and decides not to award any prizes.

Until next month, that is. Starting with the January Issue, the monthly Top Letter earns its sender £100 worth of software, and the winner gets to choose the games he or she wants. A couple of £50 software spot prizes are also likely to be on offer – so get writing.

Trouble is, you'll have to come up with a totally original opinion to collect a prize, because the Editor is going to be taking personal charge of these pages, so he says, and letters on hackneyed old topics like the price of software or piracy simply won't get past his red pencil.

Rack the old brain cells, forget any 'my machine is bigger than your machine' thoughts you may have, and get writing. Remember, the Editor reserves the right not to award prizes. If inspiration is your problem, take a look through the features in the last few issues of ACE but whatever you do, make sure that your missives start some new debates rolling if you want to make sure the new Editor coughs up...

Write to

ACE LETTERS, THE EDITOR, 4 QUEEN STREET, BATH, BA1 1EJ

REBELSTAR ROUND-UP

Mr Iain Garner is not alone!

For years a group of friends and I have been fans of **Rebelstar Raiders**. We waited for the promised scenario expansions from Red Shift and none appeared, and then Red Shift went bust! Indeed so keen was that I immediately broke into the game on the Spectrum (naughty but easy) and began to produce my own scenarios. I have since taken this further and written a utility to produce Rebelstar Raiders scenarios on the Spectrum.

I have since 'upgraded' to the ST and I am very disappointed by the standard of the games available (just count the number of vertical scrolling shoot-em-ups!!)

I would be grateful if you could pass my address on to Mr Garner so that he may benefit from my extension to what I, too, regard as a classic strategy game.

Mark Holroyd
Birmingham

I read in your magazine that **Laser Squad** by Target Games was to be released on the ST. So being very excited, I wrote to them and asked if it was true. Yes, they said, in March next year!

How long does it take to convert a game?

I am now thinking of buying a Spectrum so I can play Laser Squad... or going into a deep state of depression.

Martin Beresford
Mansfield

Good news all round on the Rebelstar front – a quick chat with Firebird's resident Rebelstar addict, Jo, elicits the information that Rebelstar II should be available for £1.99 on the Spectrum and C64 by the time you read this.

Julian Gollop, Rebelstar's creator, explains that the sequel uses the same game system but is played over an alien landscape featuring a wide variety of terrain, including rivers and vegetation. The objective, to damage aliens or steal their eggs, is based on the victory point system.

He went on to explain that Rebelstar II was written long before Laser Squad, so for the ultimate upgrade, go for Laser Squad. The Gollop brothers hadn't originally intended to publish 16-bit versions of Laser Squad, but then someone approached them and offered to do the conversion. It all took a little while to set up and get going, but the ST version will boast re-designed scenarios. "We decided to market a game worthy of the ST rather than do a straight conversion from an 8-bit game" was the line from the Gollops. So there you have it...

GK

DISAPPOINTED CUSTOMER

When I went to the PC Show, on the Saturday, I went with the impression of purchasing some really new software. But there were only a couple of games actually available for sale. I went up to Hewson, and asked if I could buy **Nebulus** and the man told me that it wasn't released until the following Friday.

Afterburner and **R-Type**, two more games which I was desperate for, also wouldn't be released for ages, I learnt. It looked as if all the Rainbird games were finished, but they weren't for sale.

Could you please explain why!

Tyrant
Doncaster

The Show does seem to be moving more towards a showcase for all the exciting new games due for release in the months running up to Christmas, and less of a marketplace for avid games-buyers. Maybe you missed the queues around the Elite stand when Overlander went on sale, or maybe that particular game just wasn't on your shopping list. Either way, the smaller shows dedicated to single machines or hardware from a single manufacturer tend to be the better option for bargain hunters and folks keen to get the latest releases – the PC Show is more of an event than a software department store..

GK

NO RELATION?

I wish to bring to the attention of

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ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

LETTERS

yourself and your readers, a name: CLIK

Clik, Amiga specialists, recently supplied me, with the utmost of despatch, disks for two recently-released games, at very competitive prices.

It's not difficult to imagine my horror and frustration when the games failed to load and, ultimately, I was forced to return them.

Equally, it's not difficult to imagine my surprise at having Mr Simon Halley phone me from Clik to explain that we had contracted a virus, previously unknown to him. He then went on to explain that he would send us, at no extra charge, two more copies of the games plus two virus-killer disks.

I am not particularly familiar with computer software companies; maybe such events are common. But be this so or not, I feel that Clik and Mr Halley deserve the highest praise for action which I consider to be above and beyond the call of commercial duty. Please, please pass on this story to your readers.

Tom Jenkins
Gwynedd

It just goes to show that some mail-order companies are trustworthy and helpful. So there's your free plug for Clik Tom. **GK**



DAZZLING

I walked into my newsagent and dashed outside again. I went and bought a pair of sunglasses and then re-entered the newsagent. With the sunglasses on I managed to look at the cover of your October '88 issue, without burning my eyeballs out!

This was the first issue of ACE I've ever bought, so I flicked through it wondering if my £1.50 had been well spent, or whether it was another waste. Well, ACE itself is a good magazine, clearly set out and with generous ratings, so that's it

isn't it?

Not quite. I wanted to read a few Atari 8-bit reviews. There are plenty of them around and at least two games a month could surely be reviewed? Atari User manages plenty, so there are a lot still being released. The Atari 8-bit is having a bad time at the moment, so help it out!

Then you weren't very nice about the Oric Atmos on page 35. It's a great micro - I've got one and so have thousands of others, and there's still plenty of software coming out for it. Seeing the photo I take it you actually have an Atmos, so if you don't want it I could give it a good home!

Your competitions are good too, but I don't understand the Ace Card way of doing competitions, so please enlighten me.

So overall, remember the minority micros (including MSX and BBC) and keep having interesting features and keep blinding people with dazzling colours on your front cover.

The Monster
Birmingham

Well, we do call the magazine ACE, which stands for Advanced Computer Entertainment. Which means that reviews of Atmos

software have no place in our pages. It's not that we've got anything against the Atmos or even Atari 8-bit machines, it's just that we feel we need to concentrate on the mainstream machines.

As to the ACE card, take a look at the ACE Card page (page 15 this month) and all will be revealed...you need to write in if you are a new reader in need of a card. **GK**

ATARI RUMINATIONS

I read virtually all the computer magazines available, and have noticed that several have mentioned that Atari are intending to release a new 'Super' ST early next year. This wonderful new machine will, it seems, have 4096 colours and stereo sound. Well, surprise surprise, Atari are releasing what is virtually an Amiga clone! Does this mean that they finally accept that the standard ST is inferior to the Amiga, and a Super model is required to try and equal (or presumably surpass) Commodore's finest? Doing this is really a waste of time for Atari, because the new ST is sure to be compatible with all ST's - let's face it, the market will be too small to justify Super-ST-only games.



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If you doubt this, then please take note of the way in which they (software companies) can't even write software that takes advantage of the Amiga's extra features, preferring to port them directly from the ST. The only people at Atari who've got their act together is the marketing department. I would love to read a reply directly from someone at Atari, to see if they could possibly justify the way in which they continually upgrade their machines, leaving the earlier buyers in the cold.

Sputnik

Hmm. When quizzed, an Atari spokesman refused to confirm or deny the existence of a new Super ST, but went on to say that 'Atari is always seeking to upgrade the quality of their product'. Would you have it any other way, Sputnik? GK

MIND-CROSSING

I have been playing **Carrier Command** on my Amiga and have been amazed with the smooth graphics and the equally good sound, but one thing crossed my mind. With all this talk about multiple-player games over the telephone or using leads as in MIDI Maze, I wondered why the writers didn't incorporate this into the game as it is the obvious thing to do. Then such things as championships for the game could be set up. With less islands of course. Also you could have two people per carrier, so you could have more complex attacks.

Matthew Randall
Hounslow

It's chickens and eggs, really. While your idea sounds fun, it's unlikely that Realtime or Rainbird would have found it commercially worthwhile to implement the concept. When Telecom cuts the price of phone calls and modems become as cheap as pocket calculators, then multi-player phone games could come into their own. Maybe Rainbird are in an ideal position to exert a little pressure...

GK

TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

Instead of your readers moaning about the price of software or the problems of piracy, or low class programs, why don't they join a hire company, and hire for a few pounds the programs they are thinking about buying? Then if the program turns out to be rubbish or so easy that it is completed within a day, then only a few pounds are lost. If the program is good then it can be bought. This will encourage software houses to make quality

software. Also it will ensure value for money in what is bought. Although for computers such as my Amiga A500, the libraries are still in their early stages, software libraries for computers such as the Spectrum are vast. If people can resist buying the game with the most advertising, and wait to test it in the comfort of their own home, then quite a few problems could be solved.

Stuart Parker
Weybridge

Given the lack of opportunity to actually play games in computer shops before you buy them, libraries could serve a useful purpose. Paying a fee to roadtest software sounds fine and dandy in principle, but the reality is that while libraries work fairly equably for books, software libraries lead to extra piracy. What's more, software houses usually sell their software on condition that it is not hired out, so software librarians are effectively breaking the law.

And you wouldn't want to encourage people to be accessories after the fact, now would you...?

GK

POWER XTREME

I am the owner of a CBM64. I have one of the old black power packs, and after about 30 minutes the power pack becomes very warm and the computer crashes when I am playing a game. I then have to wait about half an hour for it to cool down. If I try to switch on too early, the screen stays blank and the red light on the keyboard stays very dim. Can you help?

Justin Neal
Eastbourne

Without wishing to state the obvious, Justin, it's time you got a new power pack. Your current one appears to be broken and could be downright dangerous. Check out the Pink Pages, and you should find a good deal...

GK

LOUD AND CLEAR

I think I've finally worked out the quiet and noisy disk drive problem on the Amiga.

Just under the Amiga logo, you have a Commodore logo. All of the machines, with a brown badge enclosing a C, will have a quiet disk drive and their keys, mouse keys and disk eject button, will all be different from the one without the brown badge.

This only applies to Amiga 500s.

Kullinder Oulai
Basingstoke



SENSELESS STUPIDITY

I own an Atari ST and I'm quite proud of it – it is a good all-rounder and very reasonable in price (\$700AUS). But I see no point in going out and harassing an Amiga owner. The recent bombardment of criticisms, in my view, is just senseless stupidity. Just because some other people's tastes do not measure up to their standard, some people start to get abusive. In almost every issue there is some half-wit who thinks it is clever to criticise a particular machine. The Speccy seems to be the usual punching bag for these 'experts', and while I am not familiar with the Spectrum, it seems to be a competent enough unit, despite its age. Just remember, the Spectrum was all the go before these bigger computers.

I also think the critics are forgetting the fundamentals of owning a computer – after all, isn't a computer for enjoyment? I say to you 'experts', forget the petty squabbling, grow up and keep your traps shut otherwise you will all look like 'Pommie Whingers'

Grant Rowe
New South Wales, Australia

Exactly

GK

SIMPLE AUSTRALIAN

Recently here in Queensland (I'm not sure about the rest of Australia) legislation has taken place to legalise the taping of music cassettes and records as long as the copies are not sold to anyone. However, the same legislation has placed a sales tax on blank cassettes. This extra levy is paid to the record companies.

It is my belief that such a law within the software industry imposed internationally would reduce losses by software houses by software houses due to piracy. As the companies receive more revenue from blank disks, they will be able to reduce the price of software, thus attracting more people to buy software. Wouldn't it be great to see games for less than the price of a blank disk? This could be achieved by providing software companies with cheaper disks than the retail market.

Alex Borodin
Queensland, Australia

Sounds simple, but you haven't thought things through. What about the people who buy blank disks to store data – do they have to pay the levy? And just who is going to supply software companies with cheaper disks than the retail market?

Piracy is always going to put the price of software up, no matter how to try to avoid it. If software houses make fewer sales as a result of unauthorised copying, then they are going to have to cover their costs and make a profit on fewer actual sales, which means higher prices in the shops. Unless, of course, all software is sold mail-order, direct from the software houses but then you wouldn't have all the convenience of popping down to your local software supplier to choose a game...

GK

PC PRAISE

I have an IBM and would like to say it is about time the IBM got some recognition by a British gaming magazine. It isn't just a machine for Accountants and Businesses... EGA really does something for games, but admittedly, CGA suxs!

There are really heaps of games that use EGA now, like **Pirates, Rampage, Reach for the Stars, Flight Simulator III**, to name but a few. Some of them even support VGA (even betta!)

And what about some more IBM games reviewed please (with pictures but only if they are EGA – can't let all these Amiga owners be the only ones with big heads).

James Fisk
South Australia

Strange you should say that. In this very issue Andy Wilton examines the PC's potential as an entertainment machine, and we review a host of PC games.

GK

LETTERS

MACHINE-IST CRAP

One interesting little thing that has popped up recently is the controversy between Spectrum/64 and Amiga/ST owners. People with 16-bitters drag on an on about how rubbish and outdated 8-bit machines are. Then they slag off their own machines! Can't they be contented with what they have: Heck, I'm chuffed enough (when it works) with my (un) trusty 64. I mean, my friend, Steve Fearn (he always did want to be famous) right, he sold his 64 to me, with the intention of buying an Amiga, then after some other kid with an ST started saying how crap the Amiga is, how wonderful the ST is and that anybody who hasn't got an ST is a total wally, my friend ended up buying another 64!

Another part of the argument which I know 16-bitters don't agree with is this: 8-bit games are just as playable as 16-bit games. In fact in some cases, a lot more playable. Take *Wizball*, for instance. Just because 16-bit games can boast better graphics and sound than the 64 or Spectrum, they reckon the 8-bit market is dead.

As a potential buyer of a Sega system, I'd like to ask you a few questions concerning Sega software. Being a budding pixel artist, having discovered the excellent NEOS mouse and Cheese on the Commodore, I was wondering if there are any or ever will be any art packages for the Sega? If there are, can a mouse be used? In my mind the Sega System offers incredible value for money but I'd like to ask whether it's worth selling my 64 for a Sega, as I only play games and draw pics.

Robert Stephens
Sidmouth

Sensible opinions on the 8-bit/16-bit debate at last!

As for the Sega, the helpful Lesley of Virgin Mastertronic (the people who sell the system in the UK) says there are no plans for graphics software. So the simple

answer seems to be buy a Sega and hang on to your C64... **GK**

PROUD OWNER

I am the proud owner of an Atari 520STFM and was wondering if you could plug the computer into an amplifier from a HiFi system. Can you help me?

Wayne Harris
Oxford

Yup. To do the job properly, you need to get a plug to fit the monitor socket on the back of your machine. (Refer to your manual.) Pins 1 and 13 should give your the right sort of signal to drive an amplifier, so get some speaker cable and solder it onto the appropriate pins in your new plug. It might be wise to get someone with electronics knowledge to check your work and make sure that the signal won't do any harm to your amplifier before connecting the other end of the cable to a phono jack and plugging it into a line in socket on the amp. Make sure your ST and amp are switched off before plugging in, and if something odd happens when you power up, switch everything off again, double quick.

We can't take any responsibility for things that may go wrong if you attempt this little project – and remember, you might invalidate the guarantee on your equipment. **GK**

GHOST IN THE MACHINE?

I am the owner of a Commodore 64 and I have a small problem.

Occasionally, I switch on my computer and as the display comes up I get a lot of interference, sometime noise, sometimes printouts. A lot of the time I get the @ sign all over the screen. The problem is, how do I get rid of it? And why does it happen?

S N Cours
Birmingham

Your 64 isn't very well. Wrap it up nice and cosy and send it off to a C64 hospital, detailing the problem. (This service is not available on the National Health, so you'll have to go private.)

After a short wait, your computer should come winging back to you, good as new. A faulty Kernal or poorly BASIC ROM could be the problem. A firm such as Video Vault will effect the repair for about £35, but it just might be worth seeing if the same thing happens when you use another C64 power pack – borrow a friend's or see if your friendly local shop can help... **GK**

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There's nothing wrong with a little creative assistance in playing games (cheating, to use the full technical term). If a game proves almost impossible to complete, scan these pages for a little help, advice and general cheater-pokery to help you on the way. And if you've mastered the gameplay on a particular release, or know a sneaky sequence of keypresses that make the joystick-weilder's life easier, pass your inside knowledge on. Maps and POKEs are welcome in this section, too – remember, we're offering six of the best to the top tipster. Six of the best releases for his or her machine, that is...

CYBERNOID II

■ Is Mr Cecco's sequel proving too tough for you? This tip gives you infinite lives on the Spectrum.

When you come to redefine the keys, select the keys:



Easy isn't it when you know how!

Ian and Paul Roper, Bridgewater.

ELIMINATOR

■ John Phillips' latest ST classic is a tough game to crack. It's not so tough if you know the level codes though.

STAGE PASSWORD

02	AMOEBA
03	BLOOOP
04	CHEEKI
05	DOINOK
06	ENIGMA
07	FLIPME
08	GEEGEE
09	HANDEL
10	ICICLE
11	JAMMIN
12	KIKONG
13	LAPDOG
14	MIKADO

Press the **HELP** key once the game has loaded and type in the above passwords to progress to your chosen levels.

GENERAL TIPS

1. On some levels, ramping onto the roof and flying upside down can actually be the best way to reach the end.
2. When firing at aliens, always move left and right to avoid their fire. Standing in one place is usually fatal.
3. Always keep an eye on your ammo levels because when you come to collect an extra weapon or more ammo, you must decide which you really need.
4. Once the game has been completed, the rate at which ammo depletes is almost double, so choose your targets carefully. Try to dodge the oncoming aliens instead of shooting them, as you'll need to save your shots for the barriers.

■ A.J.White, Huddersfield.

MORPHEUS

■ For infinite energy on the C64 version just type in this listing and RUN it.

```
10 PRINT CHR$(147):REM MORPHEUS CHEAT
15 FOR A=1024 TO 1089: READ B:POKE
A,B:C=C+B:NEXT
20 IF C<>6164 THEN PRINT CHR$(147);"DATA
ERROR, CHECK AND CORRECT!":END
25 PRINT CHR$(17);CHR$(17);"INSERT MOR-
PHEUS TAPE";
30 POKE 157,128
35 SYS 1024
40 DATA 32,86,245,169,32,141
45 DATA 117,3,169,21,141,118,3,169,4
50 DATA 141,119,3,76,167,2,169,35,141
55 DATA 143,8,169,4,141,144,8
60 DATA 173, 8,169,48,141,91,8
65 DATA 169,4,141,92,8,76,16,8,169,0
70 DATA 141,48,15,169,173,141,122,66,169
80 DATA 28,141,219,70,76,16,8
```

■ R.Thompson, Oswestry

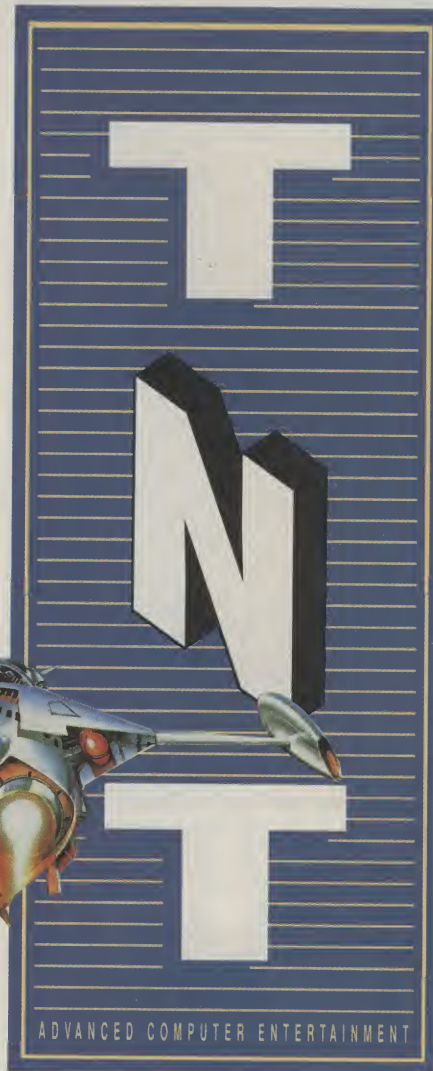
MENACE

■ The Psyclapse game may be proving tough, this Amiga cheat gives you all the weapons and infinite energy.

All you have to do is type in the following once the level has started: **XR3ITURBONUTTERBASTARD**

Now, press keys 1-6 on the keypad for the levels. Press **HELP** key to replenish weapons. Press **RETURN** key to go to the end of level guardian.

■ Phil Lukeman, Liverpool.



STARGLIDER II

■ Rainbird's high flyer may have some of you ST and Amiga owners confused, but never fear – T'N'T's here.

To build the neutron bomb you will have to find nine things and take them to Trem. He is found in the tunnel network on Apogee. The closest entrance to the start is right behind you. The nine things and how to get them, are as follows:

CRATE OF CASTROBARS. First get a petrified tree from Enos and take it to the depot on Castron. You will automatically get the Castrobars.

VISTAN WINE. Nip over to Vista – the wine is scattered all over the surface.

FLAT DIAMOND. On Vista, have a good look round. Somewhere you'll find a hole in the ground spitting out flat diamonds. Tractor one of them.

CLUSTER OF NODULES. These can be found on the surface of Dante.

ASTEROID. Pick up one of these in the asteroid belt between Millway and Apogee.

EGRON MINI-ROCKET. This is found on Aldos. It takes a bit of a search, but it is definitely there.

NUCLEAR FUEL. This can be found lying about on Aldos.

ROCK. This is lying on Q-Beta.

PROFESSOR TAYMAR. He is driving an Emma 2 on Broadway. These Emma's are VERY difficult to get in your tractor beams. Don't carry Castrobars when you pick up Taymar!

Once Trem has Taymar, work on the bomb begins. When you have delivered everything to the depot, the bomb will soon be finished. When it is, pick it up and fly over to one of the Moons of Millway. Drop a bouncing bomb on a station there and head into a tunnel. Pick up four missiles and head of towards Q-Beta. Just next to Q-Beta is a hologram. Fly into this and you'll find a space station and eight mini-sentinels. Blow up four of them with the missiles and fly back to Apogee to refuel.

Fly to another moon of Millway and pick up four more missiles. Drop another bouncing bomb on a station and go through the hologram. After destroying the remaining four sentinels, load up the neutron bomb and go above the station. Pull down so you're facing the space station and drop the bomb. It should hit the station and you'll have completed the game!

■ Charley Allen, Ipswich.

POWERPLAY

■ If you're feeling really silly, just remove disk b from your ST whilst playing the game and insert a blank disk. Now the same question will keep coming up!

■ Jonathan Burton, Luton.

CALLING ALL TIPSTERS!

Every month we give away literally hundreds of pounds worth of software. How can you grab a slice of that action? It's easy really, just get your thinking cap on and come up with some maps, tips and pokes for some of the latest games. Don't bother sending in tricks and tactics for games that are years old – everybody knows those tips already, get to work on the games that have been reviewed in the last couple of issues of ACE. You **KNOW** it makes sense. Send your contributions to the following address:

**TRICKS 'N' TACTICS
ACE MAGAZINE
4 QUEEN ST
BATH
BA1 1EJ**

VINDICATOR

■ The codeword for access to the second level on the C64 is:

ENOLAGAY

(note: one word)

■ A. Flipper, Oxon.

WHIRLIGIG

■ Want to get to the Perfectspaces quickly on the ST? Read on.

SECTOR	RESOURCES	SECTOR	RESOURCES
0	---	499	FM
1	FMC	500	---
2	---	501	FC
4	M	502	M
5	F	503	F
6	C	504	---
12	---	505	FM
13	FM	506	C
14	---	507	F
28	M	508	M
29	F	1016	C
1	FMC	2032	M
2	---	4064	---
3	F	8128	M
9	F	8129	F
27	F	751	FMC
81	FC	752	---
82	M	753	FM
164	---	78	---
165	F	234	---
495	F	235	FM
496	MC	53	F
497	F	54	---
498	---	162	---

Continue from Eigenspace 162 to Eigenspace 181 in consecutive steps (162,163,164...). Fuel dumps occur every other space. Missile dumps occur every third and Chaff dumps every fifth space. From Eigenspace 181 the route continues...

32761	FMC	524224	M
32762	---	1048448	---
32763	F	2096896	MC
32764	M	4193792	---
65528	---	8387584	M
131056	MC	16775168	---
262112	---	33550336	MC

F(fuel) M(missiles) C(chaff)

■ Jolyon Smith, St Neots.



ELITE

■ One of the greatest computer games ever written may be causing new ST owners a few problems. These tips may help you.

TRADING. Trade in food and wines until you can afford to start trading in medical supplies/computers and furs (medical supplies are a new feature, that poor agricultural worlds will pay lots for). The quickest way to build up some money is to shuttle between two safe planets that have opposite economic structures (i.e. ferry medical supplies/computers from a rich industrial high tech world to a poor agricultural world, and load up with furs for the return trip).

EQUIPMENT. All of it's useful, but the first thing you'll want to buy is a large cargo bay. With one installed your profits increase that much faster and it's not long before you'll be able to afford a docking computer. Next most essential item is the energy unit, followed by an ECM system. Fuel scoops can be handy for picking up free space cargo, but remember – you run the risk of picking up contraband. Retro rockets are an expensive luxury. If you're in that much trouble during a fight, resort to dropping an energy bomb.

DOCKING. By the time you've earned enough to buy a docking computer, you'll have docked often enough to be proficient at it anyway. But it's still worth buying one, as it takes all of the worry out of docking. Note – if you're flying towards a station with the docking computer on, and you've got some pirates or Thargoids on your tail, they can still destroy you before you dock.

LASERS. Obviously the Military laser's the thing to have mounted on the front as soon as you can afford it. A mining laser's useful if you want to spend your time chasing bits of asteroid around the Cosmos, but for combat forget it.

ENEMIES. Some are easier to kill than others, and it won't take long for you to recognise the tough ones (always I.D. a target before attacking!). Once you get a condition red on screen, stop and line up on the enemy. Keep firing until they're either destroyed or start firing back, and then apply some speed and start ducking and diving until you get on their tail (always remember to switch your scanner to X2 mode). Note: one of the easiest ways to get into Witchspace is to put your power up to max before entering Hyper-space. This doesn't always work, but persevere and you'll soon find yourself in amongst a whole bunch of Thargoids.

IKARI WARRIORS

■ Suffering on the Amiga? Help's at hand.

Qualify for the high score table and enter your name as **FREERIDE**. You'll now be able to play a one or two player game with complete invincibility!

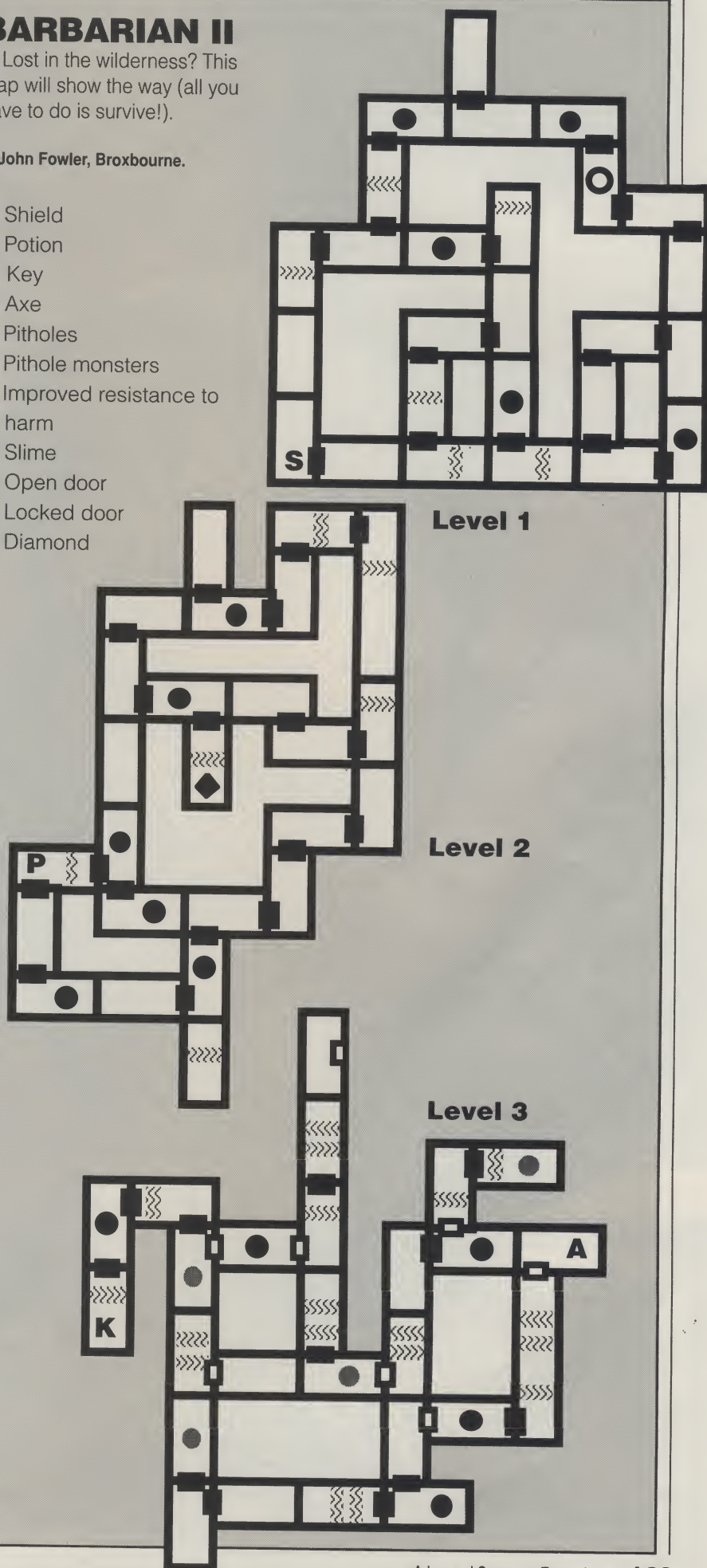
■ Steve Sellek, Leonards-on-sea.

BARBARIAN II

■ Lost in the wilderness? This map will show the way (all you have to do is survive!).

■ John Fowler, Broxbourne.

- S** Shield
- P** Potion
- K** Key
- A** Axe
- Pitholes
- Pithole monsters
- Improved resistance to harm
- ~~~~~ Slime
- Open door
- ◻ Locked door
- ◆ Diamond



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BUBBLE BOBBLE

■ Having trouble with the Amstrad version of this wonderful game? For infinite lives, simply type in the following listing.

```
10 DATA c5,e5,f5,06,f6,ed
20 DATA 78,fe,00,28,06,f1
30 DATA e1,c1,c3,00,00,f3
40 DATA 2a,5f,00,22,39,00
50 DATA 21,84,00,22,60,39
60 DATA 18,eb,cd,4c,3d,2a
70 DATA 39,00,22,5f,00,f3
80 DATA 21,50,00,22,39,00
90 DATA fb,c3,00,3c,cd,00
100 DATA 40,21,8e,00,22,c1
110 DATA 3e,39,cd,c9,01,3e
120 DATA a7,32,26,6d,32,87
130 DATA 6d,c9
140 MEMORY & 3000: Y=0
150 FOR X=&50 TO &99
160 READ A$: A+VAL (" "&A$)
170 POKE X,A: Y=Y+A: NEXT
180 IF Y<>&1c85 THEN 210
190 LOAD "BUBBLE 1
200 CALL &70
210 PRINT "DATA ERROR!"
```

■ Barry Swann, Hornchurch.

WANNA WIN SOME SOFTWARE?

Don't tell everyone, but we at ACE give away oodles of software every month to red-hot tipsters who get their maps, tips and pokes printed in the magazine. There's nothing to stop you joining in the fun either, just make sure it's your own original work you send in and you too could win loads of software!

This month's 'Tip of the Month' prize goes to Jolyon Smith, who wins himself copies of Eliminator, Starglider2, Elite, Powerdrome, Joan of Arc and Nebulus for his ST. Pretty good huh? Other winners are John Fowler and R.Thompson who both win Bombuzal for their C64s. Charley Allen also wins Bombuzal for his Amiga and A.White collects Powerdrome for his ST. Last, but by no means least, the Young brothers win themselves a copy of Operation Wolf to fight over.

Send your contributions to:

T'N'T, ACE,
4 QUEEN ST, BATH,
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LASER SQUAD

■ Here are some handy tips for this great skirmish wargame.

QUICK TIPS

1. Always leave your men on opportunity to fire.
2. The Marsec auto-gun is the best all-round weapon.
3. If a door remains open it means that there is a man (an operative) lurking there.
4. On Level Three (The Mine), examine all the dead operatives when you kill them. You will find that one of them is carrying a 'Video Key'. Take this to the room with the video console and insert it into the 'Vid-screen' - it activates the video cameras in the mine and allows you to see the operatives when you select scanner mode.
5. On the lower skill levels buy the Rocket Launcher.

GENERAL TIPS

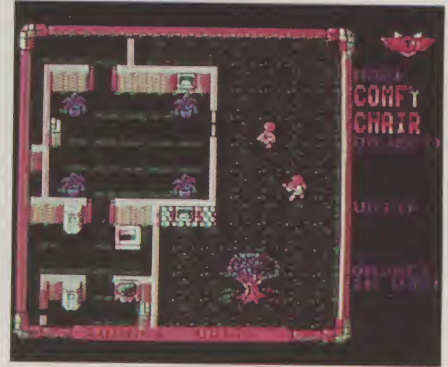
1. The price of weapons on each level does not vary, so calculate how many credits to spend on armour making sure you have enough left over for weapons!
2. Don't go on a spending spree if you have money left over. Carrying too much equipment reduces the available action points.
3. **Weapon choice** (listed by cost)
Heavy Laser - powerful, with loads of ammo, but heavy and burdens your men, reducing their action points.
Marsec Auto-gun - best all round weapon, powerful and accurate.
M4000 Auto-gun - best 'budget' gun, but lacks the accuracy of the Marsec.
L50 Las-gun - not very powerful or accurate.
Sniper Rifle - lacks autofire, but is cheap, powerful and the most accurate.
Marsec Pistol - has autofire but lacks power.
Dagger - excellent for using in close combat.
AP50 Grenade - good for blowing up operatives who are waiting around a corner. CAUTION get out of its blast range and ALWAYS remember to prime it before throwing it!
Rocket Launcher - a luxury for the early levels: its power is awesome but it lacks ammunition and has a nasty habit of blowing up the user if he is too near.
4. Take your time, you have plenty of turns. Explore the area carefully and ALWAYS leave your men on opportunity fire.
5. Use a couple of men to guard the rear of your squad.
6. On higher levels always scavenge the dead operatives for weapons and ammunition.

THE SCENARIO

1. THE ASSASSINS

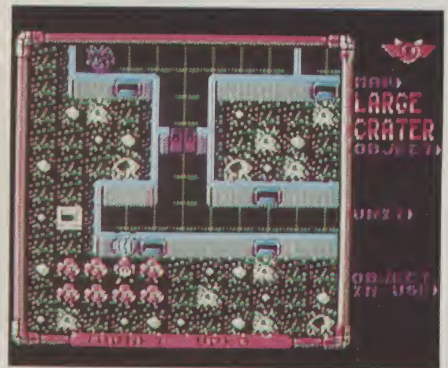
On the first skill level you can equip your men with rocket launchers and blow up the house

(and Sterner Regnix) without even entering the building! On the latter levels better progress can be made if you split your squad into two parts, one at each end, and explore the building carefully. You will find that the droids usually keep some sort of pattern, but that's not always the case. When you find Sterner, concentrate your fire on him because once he's dead the game is over.



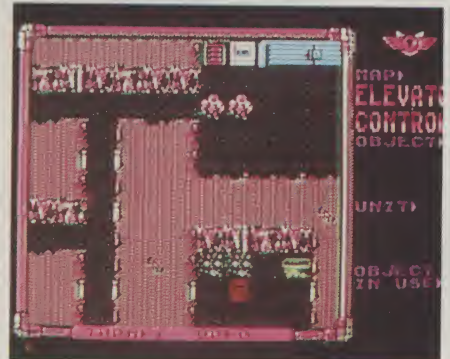
2. MOONBASE ASSAULT

The bottom left is probably the best place to deploy your men. Split your squad into two for the best results. Move your men toward the central area where most of the Databanks and Analysers are. Gas cylinders and oil drums can be blown up causing large explosions (and even chain reactions). Watch an operative doesn't shoot a cylinder or drum near you!



3. RESCUE FROM THE MINES

Before you use the explosives (which you need to blow up the prison doors) move the prisoner away from the door so he doesn't get caught in the blast. Remember to prime the explosive before dropping it and get clear of the blast. Go for the Video Key.



■ Colin and Gavin Young, Glasgow.

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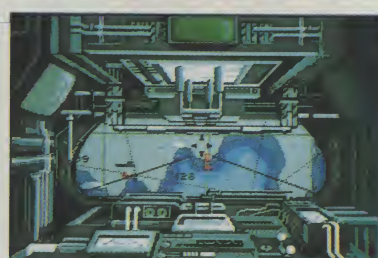
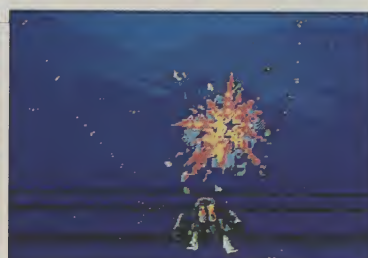
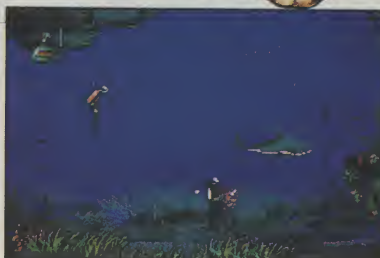
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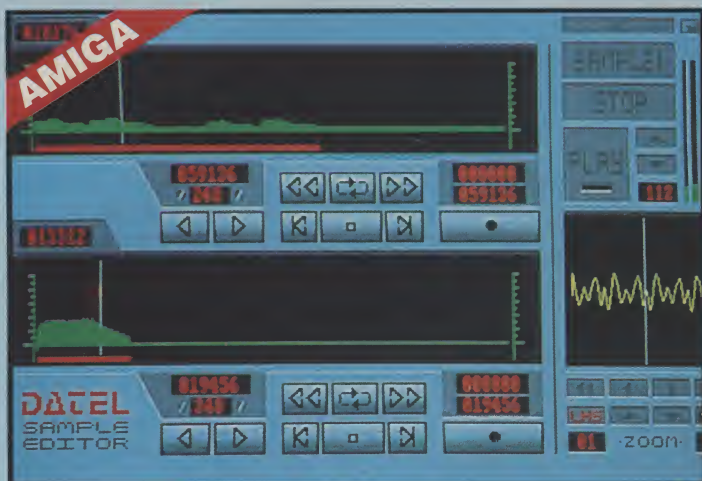
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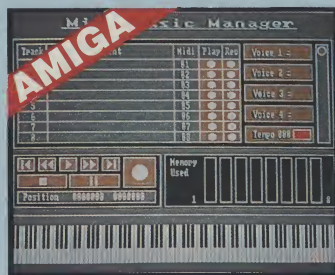
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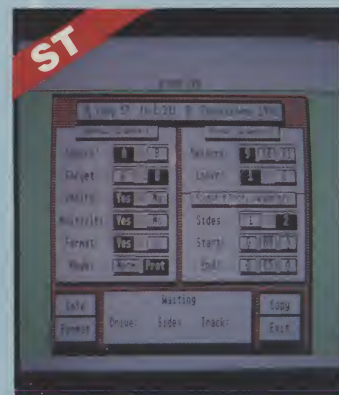
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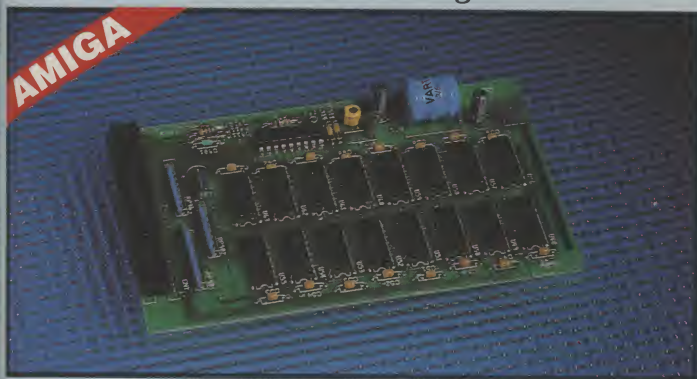
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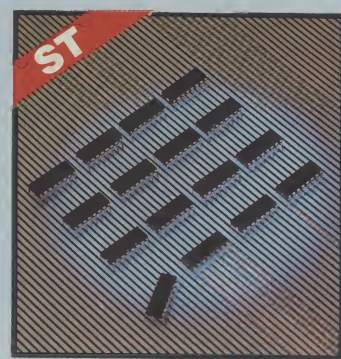
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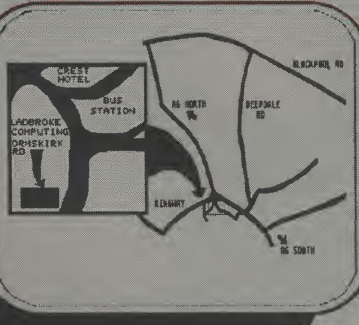
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Our thanks go to Dave Bowden of London for his superb Nigel from Rigel cartoon strip.

NIGEL FROM *RIGEL* By Dave Bowden



INDEX

● The Git in the Machine is at it again and things are getting messier. Meanwhile, in the ACE offices the only dirt being spilled is some odd facts about new boys Graeme Kidd and Kevin Cox. Plus more juicy lists.

ACE PUZZLE NO 9.....	152
ACE SERIAL.....	151
ADVENTURE HELPLINES.....	167
BLITTER END.....	170
BRAIN GAMES.....	142
CARTOON STRIP.....	139
HARDWARE UPGRADE GUIDE.....	148-149
LISTS.....	158
ODD FACTS.....	158
PENPALS.....	169
PRIZE CROSSWORD 9.....	156
PUZZLE GAMES.....	140
SECOND HAND BUYS.....	165-169
SPECIALS.....	143
USER GROUPS.....	169

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RECOMMENDED GAMES

ACE!

GAMES YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE

All of the following games are **ACE RATED**, that means they're all red hot masterpieces of computer entertainment. Some of the games were available long before the first issue of ACE came off the presses however, so we never had the chance to review them in the magazine. These games are marked with the **ACE CLASSIC** flash, and rest assured, they're all superb pieces of software and are well deserving of the title.

PUZZLES

If you're after a game that will provide you with a real challenge, without necessarily requiring large doses of strategic thinking, then it's a puzzle game you want.



BONECRUNCHER

Superior Software ● C64 £9.95cs £11.95dk ● Amiga £14.95dk

At first sight this recent release may appear to be nothing more than a *Boulderdash* rip-off. However there are a number of **highly innovative** gameplay features which give *Bonecruncher* a feel all of its own. Highly recommended for those who prefer to **solve problems** rather than **shoot them**.



BOULDERDASH

Prism Leisure Corporation ● Spectrum £2.99cs ● C64 £2.99cs
● Amstrad £2.99cs

A game that has everything – **instant addiction**, long-term challenge, frenetic **excitement** as the clock ticks down, and **extremely tricky** puzzles. You must collect jewels hidden in caverns, digging away earth and boulders to get at them. Boulders can drop and cause you serious damage, while the jewels are often hidden by seemingly impenetrable walls. **Complex, but great fun.** *Boulderdash* is a **classic** you can't afford to miss in its budget incarnation.



DEFLEKTOR

Gremlin/Vortex ● Spectrum £7.99cs ● C64 £9.99cs 14.99dk
● Atari ST £19.99dk

Optics are the order of the day here (not the spirit dispensers) as the player tries to **connect a laser beam to a receiver** and at the same time destroy a number of cells that are on-screen as well. You'll need to make full use of the **mirrors, fibre-optic conduits and polarising and refracting blocks** if you're to achieve your aim. Clear the first screen and you'll only have 59 more to do. **Fascinating stuff** that's **horribly addictive**.



NEBULUS

Hewson ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Spectrum £7.95cs

Guide pogo to the top of eight towers using the spiral of platforms, lifts and ledges that form the route. It's a highly **original game** that strikes a fine balance between **frustration and addiction**, added to which is the rotary scroll, thus making it a good looking, **playable winner of a game**.

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SENTINEL

Firebird ● Spectrum £9.95cs ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk
● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk ● Amiga £19.99dk

Bizarre and compelling strategy game played over the chequered surface of a planet
dominated by the Sentinel. Fundamentally you have to absorb energy while trying to
stop the Sentinel from absorbing yours. A clear brain and fast trigger finger are both
necessary in this very original and large - 10,000 possible landscapes - game.



SKULLDIGGERY

Currently undistributed

Boulderdash clone that completely outdoes the original on this particu-
lar machine. Again (see Boulderdash, above) you're digging for diamonds in caverns
over 100 different screens - with a time limit for each screen. Skulldiggery scores on
playability (easier screens to begin with and a choice of starting point) and its entertain-
ing two-player option.



SPORE

Bulldog ● C64 £1.99cs ● Amstrad £1.99cs ● Spectrum £1.99cs

The winning combination of strategy, frenzied blasting and great graphics
make Spore a worthy full-price release - what a bargain then to be able to pick it up for
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TETRIS

Mirrorsoft ● Spectrum £8.99cs £19.99dk ● C64 £8.99cs £12.99dk
● Amstrad £8.99cs £12.99dk ● Atari ST £19.99dk ● Amiga £19.99dk
● IBM PC £19.99dk

A fascinating geometrical oddity, this Russian puzzler turns the obscure mathematical
topic of packing into a cult game. One at a time, shapes fall downwards into a rectangu-
lar playing area. Left to their own devices they'll pile up until they reach the top of the
screen: your task is to guide them down and pack them in tightly so that doesn't hap-
pen. Different versions have proved to be rather variable in their arcade aspects, but the
brilliantly simple idea behind them means they're well worth a look whatever your
machine.



THINK!

Firebird ● Spectrum £1.99cs ● C64 £1.99cs ● Amstrad £1.99cs

Originally released by Ariolasoft at full price, but now available for a frac-
tion of that from Firebird. It's a horribly addictive game played on a 6x6 grid - either
one or two player - in which you attempt to connect four counters, horizontally, vertically
or diagonally. A compelling puzzle which incorporates many additional features and
skill levels.



XOR

Logotron ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk
● BBC £9.95cs £12.95dk

Extremely tricky maze game involving the player controlling two shields, and collect-
ing masks through 15 mazes, which increase in complexity as you progress. Also in
later stages, fish and chickens lie in wait, often blocking the masks and just waiting
to fall on you and bring your quest to a premature end. Later still, the fish and chickens
are the least of your worries as bombs, transporters and dolls crop up to conspire
against you. Smooth scrolling, simple graphics, this one requires planning to com-
plete successfully.

BRAIN GAMES

Fed up with mindless blasting? Want a game that offers you an
opponent who's worthy of your skills? This is your section.



CHESS MASTER 2000

Electronic Arts ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Amiga £24.95dk
● Atari ST £24.95dk ● IBM PC £24.95dk

Strongest chess game on the Amiga, with excellent graphics, 2D or 3D
viewpoint, 12 levels of difficulty and all the playing options you could wish for. Plus
some fairly nifty speech synthesis.

RECOMMENDED GAMES



COLOSSUS CHESS 4

CDS ● Spectrum £9.95cs ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk
● Amstrad £9.95cs £13.95dk

Best bet for **8-bit machine owners**, with choice of 2D or 3D view, umpteen levels of difficulty, and myriad options which enable you to play, watch, work out chess problems, etc against a **fine computer opponent**.



COLOSSUS MAH JONG

CDS ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk ● Amstrad £9.99cs £14.99dk

Rummy-like **oriental game of strategy and chance**. A tutor program and short manual make this an easy to use and highly entertaining piece of software for veterans and novices alike.



INFOGRAMS' BRIDGE

Infogrames ● Amstrad £12.95cs £15.95dk ● MSX £12.95cs

Graphically the best of all contract bridge simulations, with large playing cards depicted against a suitably green baize background. **Plays a good game** (for a computer, which after all is a bit short in the imagination and flair department), and features a **wide range of options** and bidding conventions which you can toggle on and off according to your style.



POWERPLAY

Arcana ● Amstrad £8.95cs £14.95dk ● C64 £8.95cs £14.95dk
● Amiga £19.95dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk

If you want to **try out your general knowledge**, we reckon you'd be better off with this original and challenging combination of strategy game and quiz than with the admittedly monster-selling *Trivial Pursuit*. *Powerplay* is graphically very pretty in its **setting on Mount Olympus**, home of the Gods.



SCRABBLE

Leisure Genius ● Spectrum £9.95cs ● C64 £12.95cs £14.95dk
● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk ● IBM PC £24.95dk

The hugely popular word game **translated very successfully onto the micro**. Fast, excellent display, and a surprisingly large vocabulary (even if it does include some strange looking words on occasions). Good enough to give even strong human opponents a **tough game at the higher levels**.

SPECIALS

Original works that are simply unclassifiable feature in this section.



ATF

Digital Integration ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Spectrum £8.95cs £12.95dk
● Amstrad £8.95cs £13.95dk

Excellent **combat/flight simulator** that's a bit of a change for Digital Integration, the simulation specialists. The emphasis is on **solid action**, the result being a sure-fire hit.



DARK SIDE

Incentive ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Spectrum £9.95cs £14.95 dk
● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk

The second game using the Freescape programming system, which sets more of an arcade challenge. The 3-D graphics are again **superb** as are the **tasks and puzzles**.



DRILLER

Incentive ● C64 £14.95cs £17.95dk ● Spectrum £14.95cs £17.95 dk
● Amstrad £14.95cs £17.95dk ● IBM PC £19.95dk

This three-dimensional masterpiece of exploration and adventure took a year to develop, but **the wait was worth it**. A whole world was crammed into 8-bit micros to give the player such a feeling of 'being there' it's **uncanny**. It's bold, **dazzlingly original** and **very playable**. A milestone in computer entertainment.

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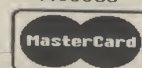
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Espionage	5.50	D2	6.40	9.50	6.40	9.50	11.90	11.90	11.90	11.90
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RECOMMENDED GAMES



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Firebird ● Spectrum £14.95cs ● C64 £14.95cs £17.95dk
● Amstrad £12.95cs £14.95dk
● BBC £12.95cs £14.95dk (available from Superior Software)

Still the **best space trading game**, *Elite* set a standard for other companies to follow. One of the first space games to use vector graphics, it's a shooting and trading effort set across several galaxies, with plenty of variety to the gameplay. You can trade legal goods in (relatively) safe systems, or run the gauntlet of pirates in the galaxies' danger spots with your hold full of contraband. Either way there's a nice line in **zero-G dogfighting**, and as big a task as you'll find anywhere.



MAGNETRON

Firebird ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk

Puzzles and action Steve Turner style. Save the world by dismantling eight satellites. Steal parts from the enemy droids to upgrade your own droid, and hopefully make your job a little easier. The **ideal game for all Quazatron fans** looking for a similar, new challenge.



MATCH DAY 2

Ocean ● Spectrum £7.95cs £14.95dk ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk
● Amstrad £8.95cs £14.95dk

Definitely **the football game on micros**; magnificent animation, great gameplay, vicious and skilful computer opponents. Various improvements over the original make this a **must for all computer football fans**.



QUEDEX

Thalamus ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk

In this **impressively challenging** game you must steer a metallic ball through ten different screens of mazes, bonuses and obstacles, all within a set time limit. This simple game concept has a host of added features to make it **particularly pleasing**: you can carry over unused time to the next screen, for example, and tackle the different screens or 'planes' in any order you wish. Excellent graphics and **utterly absorbing play**.



SPINDIZZY

Electric Dreams ● Spectrum £9.99cs ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk
● Amstrad £9.99cs £14.99dk

Tremendous stuff; steer your spinning top over tough obstacles and collect jewels, against a fiendish time limit. The game landscape is a vast system of catwalks, ramps, towers, and trampolines surrounded by lethal drops – **and NO safety rails**. Floor switches activate lifts and bridge gaps, but tripping them in the right order can be harder than it looks. A few bad guys and a lot of **nice touches**, but the exploration's the thing.



STARGLIDER II

Rainbird ● Atari ST £24.95dk ● Amiga £24.95dk
ACE RATED 927 ST

One of the **finest examples** of a game using vector graphics to their full advantage, gets the **solid 3D** treatment and comes out looking every bit a **winner**. You've got a large task to complete and there's **plenty of Egrons** to destroy, making this **combination** of blasting and exploration a game that stands **head and shoulders above the competition**.



TAU CETI/ ACADEMY

CRL ● Spectrum £9.95cs ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk
● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk ● Amiga £19.95dk

Flight simulator/shoot-em-up and its sequel which are both **incredibly smooth** and well put together. The attention to detail is impeccable as you set off on hair-raising missions as a space cadet. In *Academy* you get to **design your own space skimmer craft** as well.



WIZBALL

Ocean ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● Amstrad £8.95cs £12.95dk
● C64 £8.95cs £14.95dk

A **compelling and original** ball game in which you become the wizball and must set out to conquer the 'colour creatures' which are intent on eliminating the spectrum and rendering the landscape grey and drab. Controlling the wizball is **great fun** and makes this **one of the most playable games** to have appeared for a long time.

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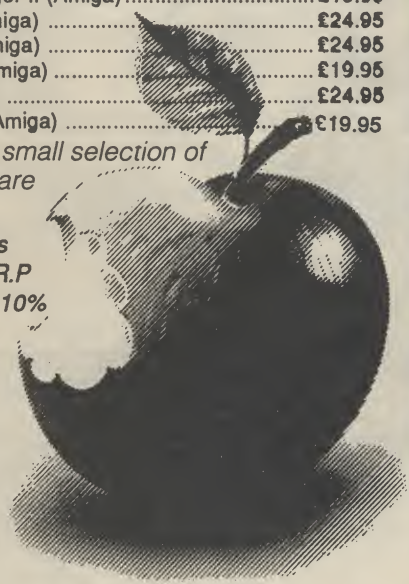
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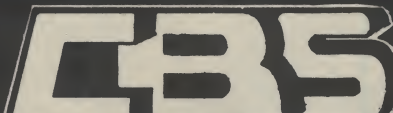
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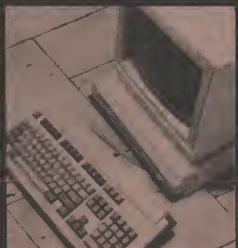

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HARDWARE UPGRADE GUIDE

	ACORN ARCHIMEDES	APPLE MACINTOSH
THE RANGE	The 305 and 310 are home machines, while the 410 and 440 are only really of interest to serious users.	The Mac SE comes in a distinctive upright monitor/system box with built-in drives, while the Mac II's system/drive box and dedicated monitor are separate. Both have separate keyboard and mouse.
MEMORY & CHIPS	The 305 has 512K of memory while the 310 has 1Mb, but both use Acorn's own super-fast 32-bit ARM chip as their central processor.	Though both machines have 1Mb of memory, the SE only has a Motorola 68000 to push it around while the II uses the much faster (but closely related) 68020.
PRICES	Recommended retail prices start at £801.60 for the 305 on its own. There's no sign of a second-hand market as yet.	Recommended retail prices start at £2,294 for the SE and £4,329 for the Mac II. Macs tend to keep their value well, so second-hand ones aren't terribly cheap. Cut-price brand new ones are rare too, so the cheapest thing can be to personally import one from the States (i.e. fly to New York, buy a Mac and bring it back with you).
GRAPHICS	Screen resolution is variable: typical modes would be 320x256 in 256 colours 640x256 in 16 colours or – with an expensive multi-sync monitor – an impressive 640x512, again in 16 colours. There's one hardware sprite – the cursor – but with that speedy ARM chip for power, the Archie's blindingly fast in software.	The mono-only SE has a screen resolution of 512x342, while the Mac II runs to a 1027x760 screen in 16 colours, chosen from a palette of more than 16 million!
MONITORS	B/w – composite video; colour – RGB + sync; no TV modulator.	As well as the built-in (SE) or dedicated (Mac II) Apple units, there are plenty of third-party monitors offering million-pixel screens and similar. Like most things Mac-ish, these get very pricey.
SOUND	The Archie's built in sound features 16 channels (in 8 stereo pairs) and a range of six octaves, all fed through a good-quality internal speaker.	The Mac's four-channel sound chip can produce some very acceptable noises – stereo on the Mac II – but you'll need a third-party MIDI port add-on if you're serious about music.
DRIVES, MICE & JOYSTICKS	The built-in drive is quiet and fast, and packs a healthy 800K onto a 3.5in disk. The Archie comes with a nice 3-button mouse – but has no joystick port!	The fast, reliable built-in drives pack 800K onto a 3.5in disk. The keyboard's very high-quality stuff, as is the one-button mouse.
SOFTWARE	Games for the Archie are rare things indeed. Superior and Grand Slam are both committed to supporting the machine, but for now the only major titles are <i>Zarch</i> and (for 310 owners) <i>Conqueror</i> , both ACE-rated games. There's still no sign of a game that really pushes the Archie to anything like its limits. The handful of graphics packages available should keep art-loving Archie owners happy for now. Other applications areas are ticking over nicely if not exactly booming.	Games software is not terribly plentiful on the Mac, though adventurers are well catered for. There's a huge amount of graphics and desk-top publishing software – most of it firmly mono – and a fine range of titles for the business user. There's also plenty of great software for the MIDI musician, but it doesn't come cheap.
PROSPECTS	The Archie's educational leanings make for a poor games outlook – there's no sign of support from any of the big-league houses – and the lack of a joystick port doesn't help. The graphics software base would mushroom if Acorn cut their prices, but until then things don't look too hot here either.	The future for the Mac is excellent, but mostly on the serious side of things.
OVERALL	The Archimedes is years ahead of its time, and vastly more powerful than the competition. A stiff bit of price-cutting would make it an unbeatable leisure machine, but Acorn just don't seem to be interested. At the current price it's a worthwhile buy for computer scientists and people with money to burn, but that's about it.	The Mac's a very upmarket machine, and is priced accordingly. Almost essential for DTP users, it's a luxury item or Yuppie toy for the rest of us.
RATINGS	<div> <p>Graphics 5</p> <p>Sound 4</p> <p>SOFTWARE:</p> <p>Range 1</p> <p>Quality 2</p> <p>Prospects 2</p> </div> 	<div> <p>Graphics (SE) 3</p> <p>Sound 4</p> <p>SOFTWARE:</p> <p>Range 4</p> <p>Quality 5</p> <p>Prospects 4</p> </div> 

ATARI ST	COMMODORE AMIGA	IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES
The 520STFM and 1040STF both come as combined keyboard/system/drive consoles.	The A500 is a single unit with built-in disk drive, while the A2000 has a separate keyboard and system box.	IBM's PC is the original, but the best buys these days are 'clones' like Amstrad's PC1512 and 1640. Specifications apply to most modern PCs, but check the details for yourself before buying.
The 520STFM has 512K of memory, while the 1040STF has 1Mb. Both use the Motorola 68000 processor.	The A500 has 512K of memory and the A2000 a hefty 1Mb, both of them using a Motorola 68000 for processing power.	PC compatibles normally have 512K or 640K of memory, with an Intel 8086 or related processor. (The 8088 is slower, while the 80286 and 80386 are faster but more expensive.)
Recommended retail prices are 520ST – £299.99, 520ST plus 20 free games – £399.99, 1040STF – £599.99. There's a strong second-hand market in 520ST's, but most of these are fitted with the old single-sided (360K formatted capacity) drive.	Recommended retail prices are: A500 £399, A2000 £1236. Shop around for lower prices or package deals. There's a fair old second-hand trade in unwanted A500's, though the recent drop in RRP means that prices here may not be too good. Also still available is the creaky old A1000, the first Amiga model and, with its lengthy boot-up sequence and puny (256K) memory, deservedly discontinued.	Prices start at around £400 for a mono PC, but a 640K machine with an EGA display and top-flight monitor will cost more like £1000. There's a thriving second-hand market, and even buying brand new you're well advised to shop around.
TV or colour monitor users can get at two screen modes on the ST, medium res (640x200 in 4 colours) and low res (320x200 in 16 colours), both working from a 512-colour palette. Users with mono monitors can only access one mode, high res, which gives them a 640x400 screen in black and white.	Hardware sprites and scrolling make conventional games easy to write, while the built-in blitter greatly speeds up large-scale graphics operations. Typical screen modes are 320x200 in 16 colours for games, 320x256 in 32 or 4096 colours for art, or 640x256 in 16 colours for serious use. In all cases, colours are taken from a palette of 4096.	The three main graphics standards are CGA, EGA and Hercules. None of these offer sprites or scrolling in hardware. The main CGA (Colour Graphics Adaptor) modes are 320x200 in 4 colours and 640x200 in mono. CGA has no palette as such: the 4-colour mode comes in two colour-scheme choices, but that's all. An EGA (Enhanced Graphics Adaptor) PC can produce these two CGA modes plus a few of its own, offering displays of up to 640x350 in 16 colours from a palette of 64. Hercules graphics are mono only, but with a maximum resolution of 720x348 they can be very useful for applications like DTP (Desk-Top Publishing).
RGB, Mono, or built-in TV modulator (520ST only – 1040ST needs separate modulator).	SCART output for e.g. Commodore's A1081 monitor (£349.99, but look out for bundling deals). TV modulators are available, but aren't included in the price.	Normally standard RGB, with no TV output.
The internal sound chip's poor, with only three channels and no stereo, but the built-in MIDI port's made the ST a must for penny-wise musicians.	Built-in sound is excellent, with 4 channels in 2 stereo pairs offering you a nine octave range or some reasonable human-ish speech. You'll need a third party add-on to get MIDI compatibility, mind you.	A weak sound standard is very much the PC's Achilles' heel as a games machine, and speaker quality is usually low accordingly. MIDI interfaces are available, but the ST and Mac still beat the PC as machines for the musically minded.
The internal drive stores 720K on a 3.5in disk, though there are still some old 520ST's around that can only manage half this capacity. A two-button mouse plugs into one of the inconveniently situated controller ports, leaving the other one free for a joystick.	The Amiga's built-in drive is often noisy and always slow, but it does pack 880K onto a 3.5in disk so it's not a total disaster. The two-button mouse takes up one of the machine's two controller ports.	Though 5.25in 360K disks are still the standard, the newer 3.5in 720K drives are becoming more common. There are two different joystick standards, IBM (which is analogue, and the norm for older or American games) and Amstrad (which takes a standard Atari-style stick).
With the best games support of any machine listed here, the ST's probably still leading the upgrade race. Graphics software's some way behind the Amiga but catching up fast, with new titles stretching the ST's limited hardware quite remarkably. The ST's built-in MIDI port has earned it outstanding support on the music front, with some excellent packages from a wide range of companies. Serious software's looking up too.	On the games front the Amiga's now coming out of the ST's shadow, at least to the extent that most ST games also appear in Amiga form. Unfortunately they are still usually straight conversions, taking no account of the Amiga's extra hardware. There's a wide range of art, video and animation packages for the machine, many of them excellent. Music's less well catered for, but the built-in hardware's got great potential.	There's a vast software base for PCs, but relatively few games that are good by modern standards. This situation's rapidly improving though, as is the art side of things (especially on the EGA front). Music software is available (if rather expensive), but it's only on the serious side of things that the PC really wins out.
Great, especially if the price cut materialises as expected. The ST's rapidly catching the 8-bit market leaders on numbers of titles, and easily outstripping them on quality.	Looking very bright now, thanks to Commodore's recent price cut.	Prospects for a PC games boom are good, especially if Amstrad's rumoured ultra-cheap PC leisure clone shows up.
An excellent all-rounder, the ST delivers no-frills power at an affordable price. It's number one for MIDI fans, terrific for games and – with mono monitor – a great machine for serious use as well.	Though its hardware makes it a great games machine, the Amiga still lacks the software to really show it off properly. It's a must-buy for the computer artist, however.	The PC's a fine all-round machine, and the workhorse of modern computing – but if you're just interested in games or music, you'd best look elsewhere.

Graphics 4


Sound 3

SOFTWARE:

Range 4

Quality 4

Prospects 5



Graphics 5


Sound 5

SOFTWARE:

Range 3

Quality 4

Prospects 5



Graphics 4


Sound 1

SOFTWARE:

Range 5

Quality 5

Prospects 4



PREMIER MAIL ORDER

TITLE	ATARI	ST	AMIGA	IBM PC	TITLE	ATARI	ST	AMIGA	IBM PC	TITLE	SPECTRUM	CASS DISC	CBM 64	AMSTRAD	TITLE	SPECTRUM	CASS DISC	CBM 64	AMSTRAD
Action Service	11.95	11.95	11.95		Legend of the Sword	14.95	14.95	14.95		Acc of Aces	2.95	2.95	2.95		Mag Max	6.95	12.95	6.95	12.95
Action ST	13.95				Live & Let Die	11.95	11.95			Action Service	5.95	6.95	9.95	6.95	9.95	5.50	8.95	6.95	9.95
Afterburner	13.95	16.95			Lombard RAC Rally	14.95	14.95			Afterburner	7.45	9.95	7.45	9.95	7.45	9.95	5.95	9.95	5.95
Alien Syndrome	11.95	11.95			Manhattan Dealer	11.95	14.95	14.95		Airbrake	9.95	9.95	13.95		Matchday 2	4.95	5.95	5.95	5.95
Ali Reality	11.95	11.95	14.95		Mars Cops	11.95	11.95			Alien Syndrome	6.45	6.45	9.95	6.45	9.95	6.95	10.45	7.45	10.45
Apollo 18			17.95		Maupiti Island	11.95				AM Civ War Vol 1, 2 or 3		14.95			Metaplex	2.95	2.95	2.95	
Arkanoïd Rev of Doh	11.95				Menace		12.95			Apollo 18		6.95	10.45		Microcross	2.95	2.95	2.95	
Artura	13.95				Mercenary Comp	14.95	14.95			Arche Fox	3.50	6.95	10.45		Mickey Mouse	5.50	8.95	6.95	9.95
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Backlash	11.95	11.95			Mini Office Professional		22.95			Armalytic		6.95			Mini Putt	6.95	10.45	6.95	10.45
Ballyhoo	7.95				Mini Putt		17.95			Army Moves	3.95	3.95	9.95	3.95	9.95	9.95	11.95		
Barbarian 1 or 2 PAL	9.95	11.95			Monsters of Night	17.95	17.95	17.95		Artura	5.95	8.95	6.95	9.95	6.95	9.95	6.95	9.95	6.95
Bards Tale 1 or 2	16.95	16.95	16.95		Monomist	7.95	7.95	7.95		Althene	3.95	2.95			Motor Massacre	5.95	8.95	6.95	9.95
BAT	17.95	17.95	17.95		Morville Manor	15.95	15.95	15.95		Barbarian Psychosis	6.95	6.95	9.95	6.95	9.95	6.95	9.95	9.95	9.95
Batman Caped Crusader	11.95	14.95	11.95		Motor Bike Madness	9.95	9.95	9.95		Barbarian 2 Palace	6.95	6.95	9.95	6.95	9.95	6.95	9.95	9.95	9.95
Battle Chess		17.95	17.95		Motor Massacre	3.95	13.95	9.95		Bards Tale 1	6.95	6.95	10.95	6.95	10.45	6.95	9.95	9.95	9.95
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RANDOM ACCESS

N'Gar Thrombobo plunges the world ever deeper into the mire but could be facing big trouble in the form of an avenging virus. Another batch of ACE odd facts and a couple of TPLs (Totally Pointless Lists). Not forgetting the brain twisting puzzle and crossword.

Horace Claghandle stared at his toilet mournfully. Hour by hour the water level in the basin was rising. His worst nightmares were coming true – he'd feared that one day a malevolent sprite might take control of Grimleythorpsedale's Municipal Sewerage Disposal Plant and reverse the polarity of the pumping motors, and here it was actually happening! Heaven knows the number of times he'd written to Mr. Tord, the Irish plant superintendent, outlining the danger. There was no excuse, of course, for those replies, and there was some suspicion on the problem might have helped lead, in some way, to his confinement at the Grimleythorpsedale Lunatic Asylum.

He measured the level in his toilet bowl once more, then wriggled across to the door in his strait-jacket and banged it with his elbow. No-one paid much attention, though – hardly surprising seeing that the door was upholstered with three inches of Acme Schizocomf Luxury Insulative Padding. Behind him he heard the first slopping of water on the floor as the level in the toilet reached the rim.

N'Gar Thrombobo was lonely. The flood of reports coming in indicated that his plans to bring the world to its knees were progressing well, but the problem was that there was no-one to worship or applaud his greatness. He'd gone through the Sewerage Disposal Plant's data banks many times, but the only other sprites he'd encountered were the ones that sat in the corner of the Flow Rate Indicator Diagrams on the main pumping station's terminals. These were stupid, surly, shovel-wielding humanoids who were far more interested in flocculum collection and methane control than prostrating themselves before superior intellects. The best he could do by tinkering with their feeble animation subroutines was to make them shovel twice as fast every time he made a speech, which was somehow rather unsettling.

Eventually, the water level in Horace Claghandle's cell reached the light fitting. Horace Claghandle was beginning to think the end was nigh. By pushing his face down the neck of the straitjacket and blowing he'd managed to inflate it and keep himself afloat, but if the water didn't get him now, the noxious gases would. Several hours-worth of material had built up in the sewers beneath the asylum since the pumping motors had been reversed, and since Horace Claghandle's room was in the cellars, it was all coming out of his toilet.

Then the light fused. A jagged spark flashed blue in the sudden darkness, eleven different types of

THE ACE SERIAL

The Git In The Machine: Part 4

gas, each more noxious than the last, ignited simultaneously, and the resulting explosion blew the door off the cell. Horace Claghandle was swept out of the door and along the corridor on a foaming tide of effluvia and straight past the office of Doctor Slammer, the asylum director.

'Doctor Slammer, you have to listen to me – the world's in mortal danger!' shouted Horace Claghandle as he raced past in his overinflated straitjacket.

Doctor Slammer stopped writing, put down his pencil and checked his pulse.

It was the gardener who finally apprehended young Claghandle, who'd been left high and not really all that dry on the compost heap by the subsiding flood. Thinking he'd discovered some kind of mutated albino marrow, the gardener had pricked the object with his pitchfork, and had then nodded wisely when

the alien vegetable screamed and deflated explosively, circumnavigating the compost heap three times before coming to rest amidst the rhubarb.

'You must be mad!' said Doctor Slammer as Horace Claghandle told him his theory.

'But it's true, Doctor Slammer. It's happened at last, like I always said it would.'

'We left you locked up in that room too long,' said Doctor Slammer, thinking more of the huge quantity of effluent that had been disgorged with young Claghandle rather than any effect the confinement might have had on his mental condition.

'There's only one way to stop him,' said Horace Claghandle, 'and for that I need to use your Amoeba.'

'Well I'm not sure I can let you use my own personal computer,' said Doctor Slammer doubtfully, brushing chocolate biscuit crumbs off his floral dress and putting down his binoculars, 'Just what is it you intend to do?'

'I'm going to write a virus!' said Horace Claghandle with a glint in his eye.

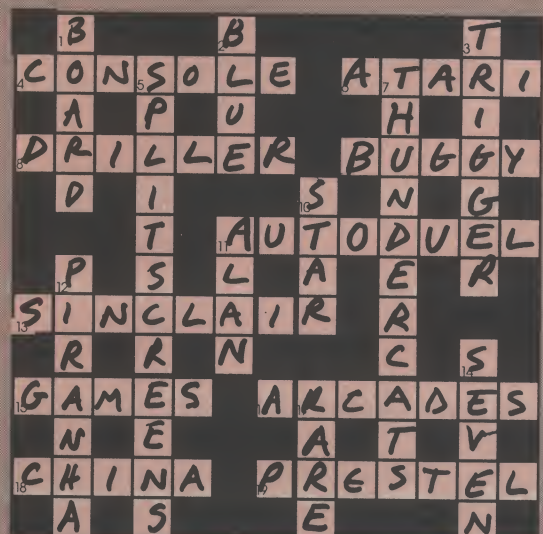
'Oh dear,' said Doctor Slammer, who'd only just recovered from a nasty cold.

'Oh dear,' said the parrot on his shoulder.

'Oh dear,' said N'Gar Thrombobo, who'd been monitoring the conversation via Doctor Slammer's telephone...

SOLUTION TO PRIZE CROSSWORD NO7

The first correct entry out of the bag was Patrick Stanley of Clapton, who wins £25 worth of software for his micro. This is what the completed crossword should have looked like...





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Set by Archie Medes

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63	77	84	91	98	119	175	182
189	196	217	343	357	413	441	448
735	749	763	784	840	847	917	924
938	945	994	1281	1743	1757	196	2618
2793	4130	4193	4627	4753	4760	4774	4837
4879	4956	6034	6321	6349	6594	6916	7119
7175	7357	7483	7735	7840	7924	7938	8162
8911	9387	9436	30674	39144	47194	47264	47537
47747	49567	51821	61894	63497	65947	69167	71281
71757	74774	74837	74956	76034	76349	76594	76916
77357	79387	79437	83972	89117	91448	94367	95123
475377	491743	498162	518217	747264	749567	763497	765947
769167	783972	794367	844193				

A six by six grid can be dissected into 616 component numbers. For example, a line of six digits also holds two five-digit numbers, three four-digit numbers, four three-digit numbers, five two digit numbers, and six single digits.

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The program works by first dissecting the grid into its component values and storing these in the array L\$(616). The order of the digits in the grid are first read from the DATA lines at the end of the listing. The first two DATA lines contain the horizontal and vertical lines respectively, while the second two contain the two sets of diagonal values. The two FOR/NEXT loops at lines 160 and 170 split each of these lines into as many smaller parts as they contain, each in turn being stored in the array (line 180). This results in 290 different values, each having from two to six digits. Lines 200 to 260 complete the array by computing the reverse of each of the values so far obtained. Single digit values are not considered at this stage as there is only the one acceptable value (7) and this is accounted for later.

The 580 values so far obtained are next tested for divisibility by 7 (lines 280 to 320). If your computer has a MOD function, this can be used as an alternative. Any value failing the test has that section of the array cancelled (line 310). Finally, all duplications are removed in the routine at lines 330 to 370. Once this has been done a count is made of all remaining values in the array. The count is started at 1 (line 390) to take account of the single-digit value 7 which we can see is present in the grid.

NOTE: This listing will run on any machine capable of using Microsoft BASIC.

```

THE Listing
100 DIM G$(30),L$(616)
110 FOR L=1 TO 30 :READ Z$: G$(L)=Z$:NEXT
120 L=1
130 PRINT "DISSECTION OF GRID IN PROGRESS"
140 FOR N=1 TO 30
150 Z$=G$(N): Q=LEN (Z$)
160 FOR S=1 TO Q-1
170 FOR D=2 TO Q-S+1
180 L$(L)=MID$(Z$,S,D): L=L+1
190 NEXT: NEXT: NEXT
200 FOR L=291 TO 580
210 Z$=L$(L-290): R$=""
220 FOR F=1 TO LEN (Z$)
230 R$=MID$(Z$,F,1)+R$
240 NEXT
250 L$(L)=R$
260 NEXT
270 L=L-1
280 PRINT "DIVISIBILITY TEST IN PROGRESS"
290 FOR F=1 TO L
300 V=VAL (L$(F))

```

```

310 IF V/7<>INT(V/7) THEN L$(F)=""
320 NEXT
330 PRINT "REMOVE DUPLICATIONS"
340 FOR A=1 TO 615
350 FOR B=A+1 TO 616
360 IF VAL(L$(A))=VAL(L$(B)) THEN L$(B)=""
370 NEXT: NEXT
380 PRINT "PRINT RESULTS AND COUNT TOTAL"
390 T=1: REM(TO REPRESENT THE SINGLE DIGIT 7)
400 FOR F=1 TO 616
410 IF L$(F)<>" " THEN PRINT L$(F): T=T+1
420 NEXT
430 PRINT: PRINT "TOTAL: ";T
440 END
450 DATA 430674,794367,518217,347194,749567,783972
460 DATA 475377,391448,048793,632159,761967,477472
470 DATA 73,590,3146,74837,747264,89117,3597,964,77
480 DATA 77,667,0314,34297,498162,71757,5499,343,78

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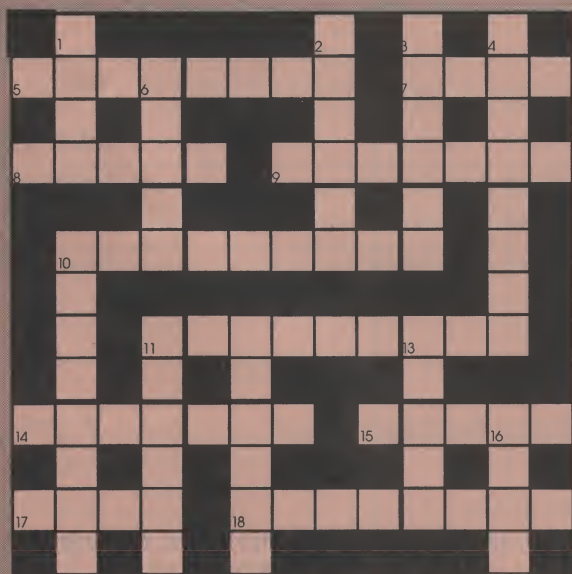
The ACE crossword is cryptic. The answer might be an anagram, or formed from the end of one word and the beginning of another, or simply hinted at by the clue. Most - but not quite all - of the answers are computer-related.

ACROSS

5. Sari they ripped in game - it's madness! (8)
7. Surrounded by dancing maid charcaters (4)
8. Warms up in preliminary races (5)
9. See 6 down.
10. Lose Jonah playing game that never was from Piranha (4,5)
11. Friends returning to war game (9)
14. 'Dune' man rewrote for software house (7)
15. See 13 down.
17. Yield from seed, say (4)
18. A kid, Nora, playing Ocean game (8)

DOWN

1. Get your teeth into, say, some data (4)
2. Bird game from Mirrorsoft (6)
3. Point to computer language fundamentals (6)
4. Put the boot in, say, at beginning of Mirrorsoft game (8)
- 6 & 9 ac. Game causing a complete blackout (5,7)
10. Gremlin's strong man (8)
11. Dreads becoming unhappier (6)
12. Book of the year (6)
- 13 & 15 ac. Greet Rene running around blockhead's Imagine game (5,5)
16. Be up to no good (4)



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THIS MONTH'S LISTS...

The ACE team have been bursting with list ideas again but these were the only three that were printable.

TOP 10 FUNNY ANIMALS

1. Opus (Bloom County, The Guardian)
2. Calculus Cat (Escape)
3. The Three Bears (The Beano)
4. John the Monkey (If..., The Guardian)
5. Lamont the Buffalo (Badger)
6. The Penguin (If...)
7. Bill the Cat (Bloom County)
8. Firkin (it has slipped our minds what he's in)
9. Bullwinkle J. Moose (Rocky and Bullwinkle)
10. SPG the Hamster (The Young Ones)

TOP 10 SUMMER DANCE HITS

1. Sex Machine - James Brown
2. Somebody to Love - The Blues Brothers
3. Ballroom Blitz - Sweet
4. The Theme from S-Express - S-Express

5. Tiger Feet - Mud
6. ABC - The Jackson Five
7. Ready Teddy - Little Richard
8. River - King Trigger
9. Pump up the Volume - MARRS
10. Rhythm Stick - Ian Dury and the Blockheads

TOP 10 PROGRAMMES FROM THE 50's AND 60's

Top 10 TV Programmes from the 50's and 60's

1. Mission Impossible
2. Marine Boy
3. Johnny Staccato
4. Lost in Space
5. Hawaii Five-O
6. Whirlybirds
7. I Dream of Jeanie
8. The Addams Family
9. Stingray
10. Mister Ed

ACE ODD FACTS

Revealing information (also useless) about the ACE team. This month highlighting newcomers Graeme Kidd (editor) and Kevin Cox (publisher).

GK had a letter published in the Radio Times when he was 11. KC once paid a magazine contributor in pizzas. GK isn't as old as Steve Cooke. KC is nicknamed Kippers. GK has a three legged cat called Bogey. KC used to pack Kit Kats. Andy Wilton cooks great chilli. Andy Smith had a pet monkey called Charlie. Bob Wade's favourite football teams are Wimbledon and the Miami Dolphins.

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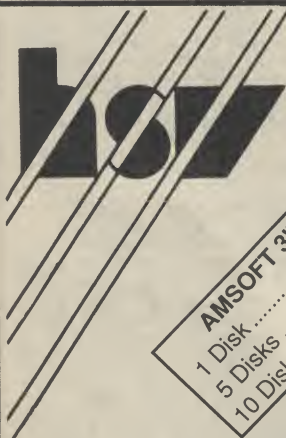
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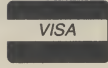
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Ann Gray, 9 Alness Close, Birchwood, Lincoln, Lincs. LN6 0YX.

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C.F.H. Bass, 21 Third Close, E Molesey, Surrey, KT8 9PW.

Heroes of Karn, Imagination, Seabase Delta, D.A.A. n Everythin, Fourth Protocol I, II & III, Ship of Doom, Message from Andromeda, Kobayashi Naru, Questprobe III, Forest at Worlds End, Wild Bunch, Knight Tyme, Spellbound, The Hobbit, Buggy Part 1 only, Mops To, Heroes of Karn, Seabase Delta, Gremlins, Lord of the Rings (Part II only), Robin of Sherwood, After Shock.
Russell Cooper, 12 Butlers Close, 52 Butlers Road, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham. B20 2PA.

Let me know your problem with Football director, The Double Soccer Boss, Premier League and Soccer Star and I'll sort you out. Send SAE to:
Paul Phillips, 29 Ormestone House, Hartcliffe, Bristol.

Adventure Quest, Attershock, Apache Gold, Arnold Goes to Somewhere Else, Boggit, Bored of the Rings, Brawn Free, Castle Blackstar, Castle of Skull Lord, Classic Adventure, Colossal Adventure, Colour of Magic, Crystal Theft, Dodgy Geezers, Dracula, Dungeon Adventure, Dungeons, A.A. n Everythin, Emerald Isle, Enchanter, Erik The Viking, Escape from Khoshima, Espionage Island, Fantasia Diamond, Forest at Worlds Ends, Heavy on the Magick, Heroes of Karn, Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy, Hobbit, Imagination, Inca Curse, Jewels of Babylon, Kentilla, Lords of Time, Message of Andromeda, Mindshadow, Morden's Quest, Necris Dome, Never Ending Story, Price of Magic, Project Volcano, Qor, Questprobe III, Red Moon, Return to Eden, Seabase Delta, Seas of Blood, Smugglers Cove, Snowball, Souls of Darkon, Spellbreaker, Spytrek, Subunk, Sydney Affair, Terrormolinos, The Case of the mixed-up Shymmer, The Trial of Arnold Blackwood, Vera Cruz Affair, Very Big Cave Adventure, Warlord, Wise and Fool of Blackwood, Worm in Paradise, Zork I
Joan Pancott. Telephone 0305 784155 - Any Day - Noon to 10pm.

For technical help on Commodore 64 Basic and Machine/Assembler language. Please contact Johnathan Kendall (for most problems would you please write!) I will endeavour to reply to all letters - if you enclose a stamped addressed envelope! Johnathan Kendall, 27 Bishop Bridge Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR1 4ES. Tel: 0603 625987

The Pawn, Sorcerer, Planetfall, Leather Goddess of Phobos, Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy
Colin Bass, 21 Third Close, E Molesey, Surrey, KT8 9PW.

The Pawn plus early stages for Guild of Thieves (I've only scored 300+ points so far).
Clive, 66 Billett Lane, Berkhamsted, Herts, HP4 1DR.
Jack The Ripper (p1-3), Dracule (p1-3), Hampstead, Big Sneeze and others.
N Buzzard, 11 Faversham Drive, Weston-super-Mare, Avon, BS24 9NZ.

I can help Spectrum owner with GAC, +2 loading problems, removing attribute clash + any basic programming problems, GAC, PAW and I also have an extensive knowledge of ZX BASIC. I can help fellow P B Mers on Hade Games 'Avalon'. Just send an SAE to:
Matt Burke, 33 Brookhouse Hill, Fulwood, Sheffield, S10 3TB.

Adventure Quest, Beyond Zork, Infidel, Plundered Hearts, Starcross, Trinity, Castle Blacktar, Classic/Colossal Adventure, Dungeon Adventure, Emerald Isle, Gnome Ranger, Guild of Thieves, Hacker, H.H.G.T.G., Jinxter, Knight Orc, Leather Goddesses, Lords of Time, Mindshadow, Nord and Bert, The Pawn, Planetfall, Price of Magic, Red Moon, Return to Eden, Snowball, Wishbringer, Worm in Paradise
Phil Armstrong, 92 Dryden Road, Low Fell, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear. NE9 5TX
Tel: (091) 4875639

The Colour of Magic Part 1 and some of Part 2.
John Morris, 130 Avondale Road, Shipley, West Yorkshire. Tel: 0274 586238 weekdays 3-6pm, weekends all day.

For tech help on Dungeon Master Tel 0734 780508, ask for Chris.

Amiga owner willing to swap hints & tips on the following games:- Great Giana Sisters, Leathernecks XR35, F18 Interceptor, Test Drive, Xenon, Firepower, Hollywood Strip Poker, Tetris, ECO, Vampire Emprie, Soccer Supremo, Garrison I & II, Bubble bobble and over 100 more.
Mr S Lyle, 27 Stansted Close, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 2TW. Tel: 0245 356641 after 8pm or weekends

Adventure Land, Colossal Adventure, Circus, Colditz, Greedy Gulch, Jewels of Babylon, Knights Quest, Magic Mountain, Pharaoh's Tomb, Eye of Bain, Planet of Death, Ship of Doom, Espionage Island, Hobbit, Invincible Island, Inca Curse, Ten Little Indians, Perseus and Andromeda, Lords of Time, SAE required

with all requests for help.
Nirmal Singh, 104 Vansittart Road, London, E7 0AA.

Colossal Cave (original adventure), Guild of Thieves, Leather Goddesses of Phobos, The Pawn, Jinxter.
Clive J Mewse, 66 Billett Lane, Berkhamsted, Herts, HP4 1DR.

All aspects of BASIC especially adventures, debugging, compression and protection, simple machine code including RSXS, playtesting, poking. Please state level of understanding. Have got a CPC464, GT64, Multiface II+, DK 'tronics Speech rom. General Amstrad queries welcome but solutions not guaranteed.
Sean McManus, 226 Chertsey Rise, Stevenage, Herts. SG2 9JQ.

The Pawn and Knight Orc (part 1 and early part 2).
Shazad Ahmed, Tel: 01-340 9176 (4-10pm).

Bard's Tale I & II, Ultima IV, Phantasia 1, Gnome Ranger, Mindshadow.
Derek Wong, 42 Ingram Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey, CR4 8EB.

Dungeon Master
SAE to: Anthony Hopkins, 91 Springfield Avenue, Sandiacre-
Nottingham, NG10 5NA.

Commodore 64 help service, a new, free way 2 reviewing help on all games. Every arcade game is covered with pokes maps and tips. Old and new games send for information.
Mark Essen, 26 Thick Hollins Drive, Meltham, Huddersfield, HD7 3DL.

The pawn, guild of thieves, Jinxter, Leather Goddesses of Phobos, Colossal Cave.
Clive J Mewse, 438A, Ewell Road, Tolworth, Surbiton, KT6 7E2

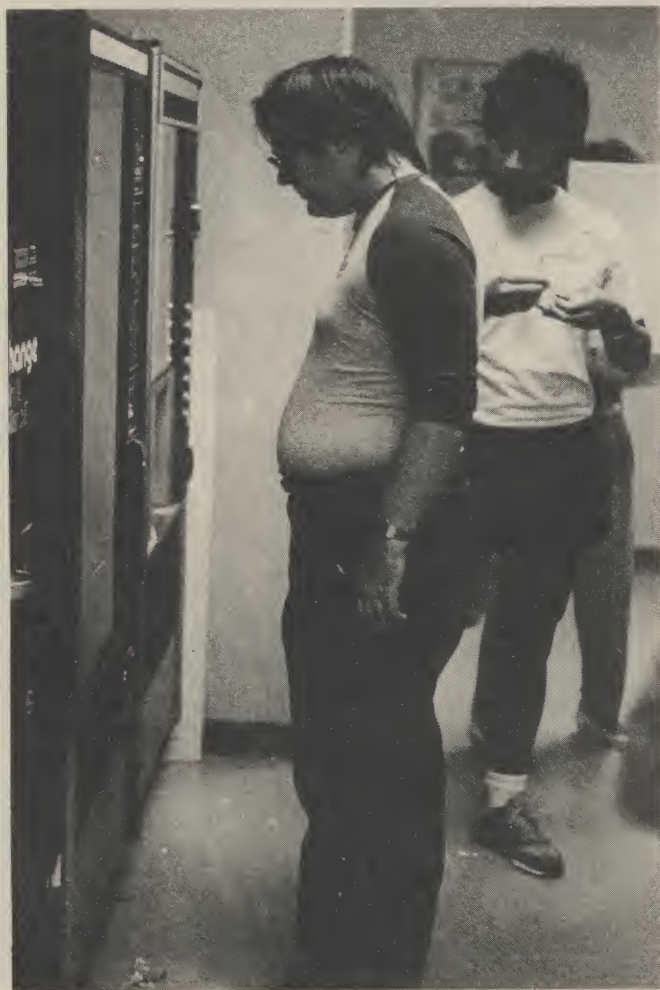
Jinxter, Pawn, Guild of Thieves, Leather Goddesses, Colossal Cave, Mr X. Clive Mewse, 438A Ewell Road, Tolworth, Surbiton, KT6 7EL.

The Pawn, Guild of Thieves, Jinxter, Corruption, The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy, Hollywood Hijinx and I have 80+ points on Wishbringer.
Anil Tohani, 5 Orchard Avenue, Rainham, Essex RM13 9NY.

Any help on Ultima V appreciated. All letters answered. I have most character replies on disc in text files, almost complete dungeon plans, and will attempt to reciprocate on any info.
N.B.H Vickerstaff, 670 Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe, Cleveland, TS16 0DP. Tel: 0642 781073

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THE BLITTER END...



BIG IN AMERICA

WARNING: due to the fast paced action and intense excitement induced by Actionware products, they are not recommended for pregnant women and those with weak hearts." Thus reads the stern, public-spirited notice on the box of Actionware's *Capone*, but you could be forgiven for wondering why. Is a boring old *Hogan's Alley* style shoot-out game really going to do pregnant women a mischief? Is a light-gun an unsuitable plaything to have around a maternity ward? Maybe they don't build their expectant women any too tough over in the States, but here at the Blitter End we reckon British mums-to-be are more than a match for such simple blasting fare. Watch out for *Operation Wolf* machines in an ante-natal clinic near you, real soon!

And hopping deftly from buns in the oven to snacks in the microwave, how about this startling photo from ex-editor Steve Cooke's candid (or even candied) camera? Steve was at Microprose's Baltimore HQ when he spotted this stout fellow using the company's extensive electronic meal-dispensing facilities. Apparently you can get a full range of sweets, TV dinners, Ding Dongs and other essential forms of nutrition, all at the touch of a button. Isn't technology wonderful? (We would like to strongly deny that the actual link between this and the previous item has anything to do with unusually large waist measurements. Why, the thought never even entered our heads.)

GO WILD!

Tony Ling from Dorchester won't forget 'lucky' issue 13 in a hurry. Why? Because he was the fortunate chap who managed to win the ACE/SSI competition. Tony's now won himself a whopping £600 worth of travel vouchers. Mrs Wendy Stokes-Clare from Coventry is also pleased with herself at the moment as she scooped the second prize of 60 worth of *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* books. The answers were as follows:

1. The city overrun by monsters in *Pool of Radiance* is Phlan (Phelan counted).
2. The ruined temple your party penetrates in *Heroes of the Lance* is Xak Tsaroth.
3. NPC stands for Non Player Character(s).

THE WHAT???

Let's face it folks, we've made our fair share of foul-ups in our time here on ACE. Indeed, we've used up several other magazines' fair shares too, and will probably need to turn out a few dozen mistake-free issues just to balance the books again. That said, Issue 14 contained an error that fairly rocked us on our heels, an OOPS! so awful, hurtful and misleading that we can hardly bring ourselves to believe it happened.

We're referring, of course, to Steve Cooke's fond farewell on Page 132, where he appeared to describe his bosom buddies Bob Wade, Andy Smith and Andy Wilton as 'The Ugly'. As all ACE readers will instantly have realised, this should have read 'The Snuggly', a fittingly sentimental tribute from good old Steve to his bestest mates, his favourite people in the whole world etc. Needless to say, a rigorous internal enquiry is in progress to find out who it was that so cruelly mauled Steve's kind parting words.



Snuggly, or ugly!

ADVERTISERS INDEX

16 Bit	144
A.T.S	158
Actionware	134
Activision	54, 55, 65, 92
Ashcom	144
Atari	80, 81
Athene Consultants	142
Bath Computer Shack	155
B Bytes	142
Best Byte	141
Big Apple	57
C.B.S	146
Cheeta	160
Compumart	63, 77
Computer Adventure World	161
D & H Games	126
Datel	136, 137
Digital Integration	104
Domark	34, 35
Dynamic	88, 89
Electronic Arts	83
Evesham Micros	140
Exmouth Micros	168

Gifford Soft	153
Goliath	39
Grand Slam Entertainments	29
Gremlin	16, 17, 40, 60, 61, 131
Homesoft	152
Homeview	153
I.D.S	162
Incentive	86, 87
Infogrames	135
Ladbroke Computing	138
Logic Sales	146
M.C.D	150
Mailcenta	154
Mailsoft	164
Mandarin	39
Martech	107
Megaland	147
Megasave	144
Microprose	6, 66, 106, 113
Microware	166
Mirrorsoft	14, 25, 122
N.B.S	162
Ocean	1FC, 3, 12, 13, 20, 98, 110, 1BC

S.D.C	163
S.E. Kent	144
S.T.D	166
Sabre 16	166
Selec	158
Shekhana	168
Softcellars	157
Software Cellar	142
Software City	159
Software Express	164
Softville	142
Sublogic	124
Sound and Vision	156
Telecomsoft	46, 93, 102, 108, 130
Telegames	168
Thirsk	168
Topsoft	143
U.S. Gold	30, 31, 48, 68-73, 96, 97, 103, 132, OBC
Video Vault	64
W.A.V.E	146
Worldwide	166
Yorcom	145



THE ARCADE COMPILATION OF THE YEAR

TAITO

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Hits



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RASTAN The Warrior King. Lands that produce men of legend, dragon slayers, lie in his shadow – guardians of evil fear his fire spewing sword, the axe he wields as swift as lightning. State of the art programming makes a true simulation of the Arcade for your home micro. enjoy superb graphics and realistic action as RASTAN takes on a world of dangers – magical wizards, fire breathing lions, bats, snakes, skeletons and finally the living dead. Is it more than you can handle?



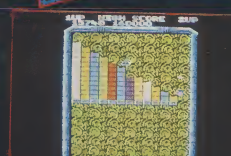
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SLAP FIGHT You are the pilot of the Slapfighter and must destroy the evil alien swarms which confront you, wave after deadly wave on the ever hostile planet of Orac. To aid you in your challenge collect icons and substantially increase your fire power and speed. Superb graphics and split second timing give this game an addictive edge.



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RENEGADE REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE? In the knife-edge world of the vigilante there is no place to rest, no time to think – but look sharp – there is always time to die! From the city subways to the gangland ghettos you will always encounter the disciples of evil who's mission it is to exterminate the only man on earth who dares to throw down the gauntlet on their path – the Renegade. PLAY RENEGADE...PLAY MEAN!



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ARKANOID The era and time of this story is unknown. After the mothership "Arkanoid" was destroyed, a spacecraft "Vaus" scrambled away, only to be trapped in the void... You control the Vaus and have to penetrate 32 levels and then confront the "Dimension Changer" whom you must destroy in order to reverse time and resurrect the "Arkanoid." Frantic action and split second timing combine to produce the most addictive and compulsive game.



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FLYING SHARK HOT FROM THE ARCADES. Flying Shark is the definitive conversion of this shoot-em-up, chart-topping classic hit from Taito. Develop your strategy as you face swarms of enemy planes, tanks, gun emplacements and a host of sea-borne craft as you bomb, blast and battle your way into arcade history.



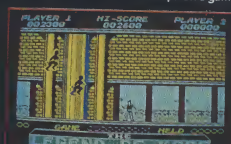
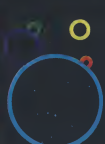
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ARKANOID REVENGE OF DOH. Eons have passed...yet despite apparent annihilation in the original ARKANOID game, Dimension-controlling force "DOH" has come back to life, and occupying the huge space-craft ZARG, has entered our Universe. ARKANOID type space-fighter MIXTEC runs through long forgotten computer data until it finds the answer to his threat... "VAUS 2" is launched and speeds towards the threatening alien presence, before it can extract its revenge... "The Revenge of Doh"



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BUBBLE BOBBLE TAITO'S NO 1 ARCADE HIT IS HERE! Meet Bub and Bob, two of the busiest beasts you ever saw, as they battle their way across 100 levels of controlled chaos in search of their girlfriends (ahhh!). Jump around picking up goodies and secret weapons as you seek to outsmart your enemies, but beware...hang around too long and you'll face Baron von Blubba, from whom there's no escape!

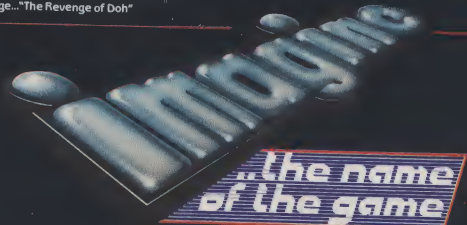


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LEGEND OF KAGE Legend has it that long ago in Japan the beautiful Princess Kiri was kidnapped by the evil Dragon King, and Kage, a young ninja who was walking with her in the forest at the time, was given the formidable task of rescuing her. You must help Kage in his quest through the forest to the Dragon King's palace, gain entrance, find Kiri and take her to safety, while avoiding the Dragon King's ninja guards.



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